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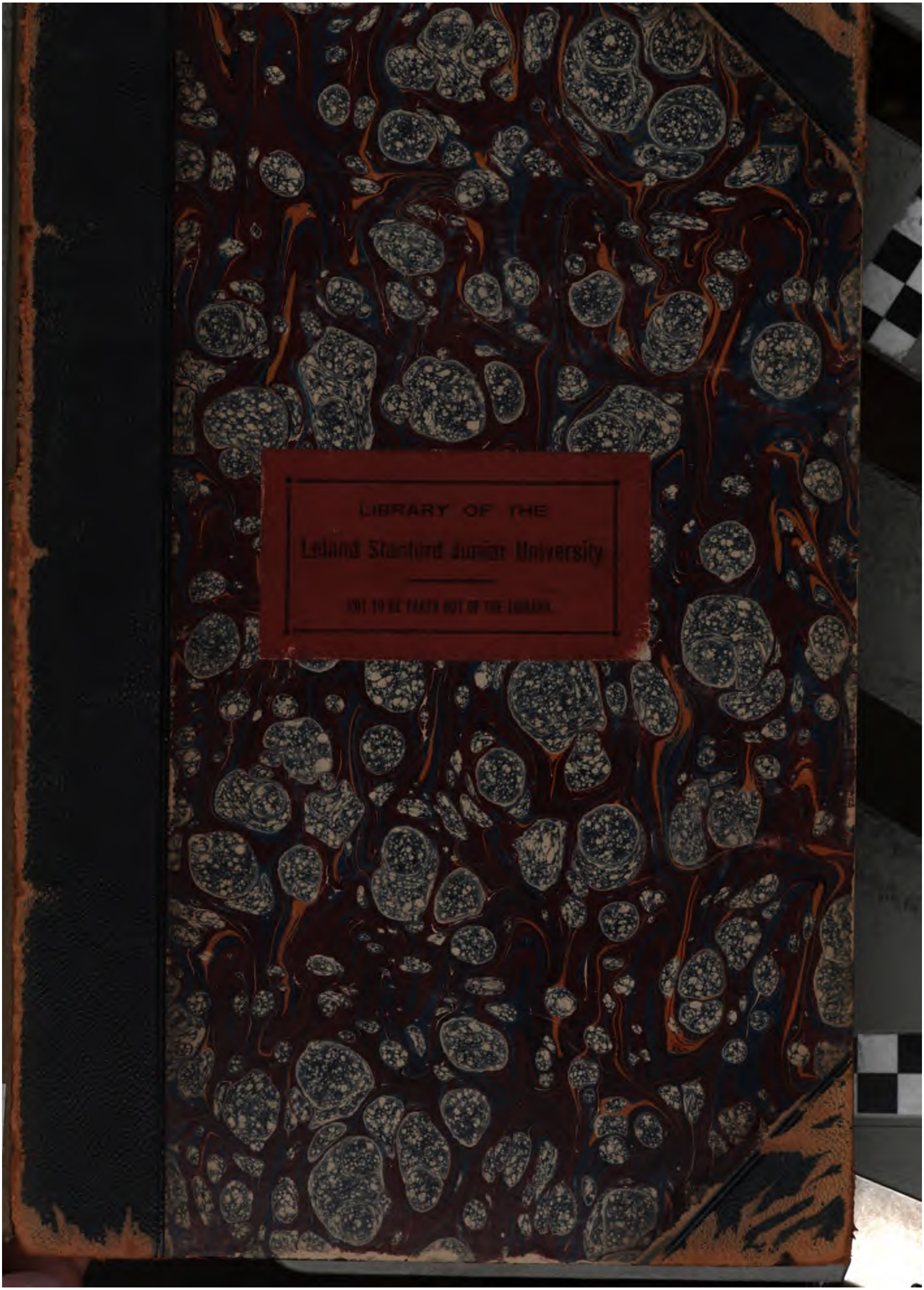
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ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

WITH

APPENDICES,

TAKEN BEFORE

GROUP "A."

(MINING, IRON, ENGINEERING, HARDWARE, SHIPBUILDING, AND COGNATE TRADES)

OF THE

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

(VOLUME I.)

MINING.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
April 1892.

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ROYAL WARRANT APPOINTING THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

VICTORIA R.

Victoria, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith.

To Our right trusty and well-beloved Councillor Spencer Compton Cavendish, commonly called Marquess of Hartington; Our right trusty and right well-beloved Cousin and Councillor Edward Henry, Earl of Derby, Knight of Our Most Noble Order of the Garter; Our right trusty and well-beloved Councillor Sir Michael Edward Hicks-Beach, Baronet, President of the Board of Trade; Our right trusty and well-beloved Councillor Anthony John Mundella; Our right trusty and well-beloved Councillor Henry Hartley Fowler; Our right trusty and well-beloved Councillor Leonard Henry Courtney; Our right trusty and well-beloved Councillor Sir John Eldon Gorst, Knight, one of Our Counsel learned in the Law, one of the Under-Secretaries of State to Our Principal Secretary of State for India; Our trusty and well-beloved Sir Frederick Pollock, Baronet, Master of Arts, Corpus Professor of Jurisprudence in Our University of Oxford; Our trusty and well-beloved Sir Edward James Harland, Baronet; Our trusty and well-beloved Sir William Thomas Lewis, Knight; Our trusty and well-beloved Alfred Marshall, Esquire, Master of Arts, Professor of Political Economy in Our University of Cambridge; Our trusty and well-beloved William Abraham, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved Michael Austin, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved Gerald William Balfour, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved Joseph Cheney Bolton, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved Thomas Burt, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved Jesse Collings, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved David Dale, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved Alfred Hewlett, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved Thomas Henry Ismay, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved George Livesey, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved Tom Mann, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved James Mawdsley, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved Samuel Plimsoll, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved Henry Tait, Esquire; Our trusty and well-beloved Edward Trow, Esquire; and Our trusty and well-beloved William Tunstill, Esquire, greeting.

Whereas We have deemed it expedient that a Commission should forthwith issue to inquire into the questions affecting the relations between employer and employed; the combinations of employers and of employed; and the conditions of labour, which have been raised during the recent trade disputes in the United Kingdom; and to report whether legislation can with advantage be directed to the remedy of any evils that may be disclosed, and, if so, in what manner.

Now know ye, that We, reposing great trust and confidence in your knowledge and ability, have nominated, constituted, and appointed, and do by these presents nominate, constitute, and appoint you, the said Spencer Compton Cavendish, commonly

called Marquess of Hartington; Edward Henry, Earl of Derby; Sir Michael Edward Hicks-Beach; Anthony John Mundella; Henry Hartley Fowler; Leonard Henry Courtney; Sir John Eldon Gorst; Sir Frederick Pollock; Sir Edward James Harland; Sir William Thomas Lewis; Alfred Marshall; William Abraham; Michael Austin; Gerald William Balfour; Joseph Cheney Bolton; Thomas Burt; Jesse Collings; David Dale; Alfred Hewlett; Thomas Henry Ismay; George Livesey; Tom Mann; James Mawdsley; Samuel Plimsoll; Henry Tait; Edward Trow; and William Tunstill; to be Our Commissioners for the purposes of the said inquiry.

And for the better effecting the purposes of this Our Commission, We do by these presents give and grant unto you, or any nine or more of you, full power to call before you such persons as you shall judge likely to afford you any information upon the subject of this Our Commission; and also to call for, have access to, and examine all such books, documents, registers, and records as may afford you the fullest information on the subject; and to inquire of and concerning the premises by all other lawful ways and means whatsoever.

And We do further by these presents authorise and empower you, or any nine or more of you, to visit and inquire at such places as you may deem it expedient so to visit and inquire at, for the more effectual carrying out of the purposes aforesaid; and to employ such persons as you may think fit to assist you in conducting any inquiry which you may hold.

And We do furtner by these Our presents will and ordain that this Our Commission shall continue in full force and virtue; and that you, Our said Commissioners, or any nine or more of you, may proceed in the execution thereof, and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued from time to time by adjournment.

And We do further ordain that you, or any nine or more of you, have liberty to report your proceedings under this Our Commission from time to time, if you shall judge it expedient so to do.

And Our further will and pleasure is that you do, with as little delay as possible, report to Us under your hands and seals, or under the hands and seals of any nine or more of you, your opinion upon the matters herein submitted for your consideration.

Given at Our Court at St. James's the twenty-first day of April, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-one, in the fifty-fourth year of Our Reign.

By Her Majesty's Command,
(Signed) HENRY MATTHEWS.

REFERENCE.

A Royal Commission to inquire into the questions affecting the relations between employer and employed; the combinations of employers and of employed; and the conditions of labour which have been raised during the recent trade disputes in the United Kingdom; and to report whether legislation can with advantage be directed to the remedy of any evils that may be disclosed, and, if so, in what manner.

GROUP A.

MINING, IRON, ENGINEERING, HARDWARE, SHIPBUILDING, AND COGNATE TRADES.

LIST OF WITNESSES.

Name.	Interests represented.	Nos. of Questions in Evidence (Vol. I., Group A.)	Days on which Evidence was given. (Vol. I., Group A.)	Page in Digest. (Vol. I., Group A.)	
				Analysis.	Précis.
Mr. William Hammond Patterson.	Durham (Coal) Miners' Association	1–383	1st	87	7
„ John Wilson, M.P.	Durham (Coal) Miners' Association	384–692	„	87	7
„ Joseph Toyn	Cleveland (Ironstone) Miners' Association	693–1191	2nd	87	12
„ John Norman	Cleveland (Ironstone) Miners' Association	1192–1219	„	88	12
„ Jabez Strong	Cleveland (Ironstone) Miners' Association	1220–1325	„	88	12
„ John Dennington	Cleveland Mine Owners' Association	1326–1388	3rd	88	14
„ Hugh Bell	Cleveland Mine Owners' Association	1389–1565	„	88	14
„ William Walker	Cleveland Mining Engineers	1566–1668	„	89	15
„ Lindsay Wood	Durham Coal Owners' Association	1669–1961	4th	89	9
„ Frank Stobart	Durham Coal Owners' Association	1962–2085	„	89	10
„ Ralph Young „ John Nixon	Northumberland (Coal) Miners' Mutual Confident Association.	2086–2467	5th	90	16 17
„ William Steele	Northumberland and Durham Miners' Permanent Relief Fund Friendly Society.	2468–2578	6th	90	18
„ William Henry Lambton	Durham County Colliery Enginemen's Mutual Aid Association and National Federation of Colliery Engineers.	2579–2706	„	91	10
„ Ernest Foster	Durham Cokemen's Association	2707–2834	„	91	11
„ Robert Hansom	Durham Cokemen's Association	2835–2855	„	92	12
„ John George Weeks	Northumberland Coal Owners' Association	2856–3123 and 3250–3257.	7th	92	18
„ Robert Ormston Lamb	Northumberland Coal Owners' Association	3124–3249	„	93	19
„ George Jaques	Northumberland and Durham Coal Mining	3258–3706	7th & 8th	93	20
„ John Weir	Fife and Kinross (Coal) Miners' Association	3707–3941	8th	95	21
„ David Morgan	Aberdare and Merthyr (Coal) Miners' Association.	3942–4387	9th	96	22
„ Isaac Evans	Swansea and Llanelly (Coal) Miners' Association.	4388–4957	10th	96	23
„ Alfred Onions	South Wales and Monmouthshire (Coal) Miners' Federation and Coal Mining.	4958–5423	10th & 11th	97	24
„ Thomas Richards	South Wales and Monmouthshire (Coal) Miners' Federation.	5424–5520	„	98	25
„ William Evans	Rhondda (Coal) Miners' Association	5521–5731	11th	98	25
„ Langford Ridsdale	Tamworth Coal Owners' Association	5732–5781	„	99	31
„ Enoch Rees	Anthracite Miners' Association (Carmarthenshire).	5782–5799	12th	99	26
„ George Caldwell	South Lancashire and Cheshire Coal Owners' Association, and Colliery Owners of West Lancashire.	5800–6109	„	99	30
„ George Watson Macalpine	South Lancashire and Cheshire Coal Owners' Association and North Lancashire District.	6110–6417	„	100	30
„ Arthur Sopwith	Cannock Chase Coal Owners' Association	6418–6600	13th	101	32
„ Frank William Thomas Brain.	National Association of Colliery Managers	6601–6709	„	101	33
„ William Fairley	National Association of Colliery Managers	6710–6884	„	102	33
„ William John Williams	North Wales (Slate) Quarrymen's Union	6885–7174	13th & 14th	102	28
„ David Griffith Williams	North Wales (Slate) Quarrymen's Union	7174*a*	14th	102	28

List of Witnesses—*continued.*

Name.	Interests represented.	Nos. of Questions in Evidence (Vol. I., Group A.)	Days on which Evidence was given. (Vol. I., Group A.)	Page in Digest. (Vol. I., Group A.)	
				Analysis.	Précis.
Mr. John Puxley White -	Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Leicestershire Coal Owners' Association, and Coal Owners of South Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Warwickshire.	7175–7624 -	14th	102	34
„ Frederick Channer Corfield	Coal Owners of Derbyshire (other than South Derbyshire) and Nottinghamshire.	7625–7828 -	„	103	34
„ Frederick Parker Rhodes -	South Yorkshire Coal Owners' Association -	7829–8061 -	14th & 15th	103	36
„ Arthur Marshall Chambers	South Yorkshire Coal Owners' Association -	8062–8138 -	15th	104	36
„ Joseph Thomas Robson -	Government Inspection of Mines in South Wales District.	8139–8263 -	„	104	26
„ George Lamb Campbell -	Central Association for Dealing with Distress caused by Mining Accidents.	8264–8359 -	„	104	29
„ Evan Owen - -	Monmouthshire and South Wales Miners' Permanent Provident Society.	8360–8457 -	16th	104	27
„ Henry Thomas - -	Miners' Permanent Provident Society -	8458–8502 -	„	105	28
„ John Lewis - -	Miners' Permanent Provident Society -	8503–8575 -	„	105	28
„ William Kerry - -	Coal Mining at Swanwick Collieries - -	8576–8699 -	„	105	35
„ John Bennett - -	Coal Mining at Swanwick Collieries and Derbyshire Miners' Union.	8700–8853 -	„	105	35
„ Benjamin Morris - -	Derbyshire Mining and the Miners' Union -	8854–9037 -	„	105	35

LABOUR COMMISSION.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

GROUP A.

Mining, Iron, Engineering, Hardware, Shipbuilding, and Cognate Trades.

FIRST DAY.

Commission Room, Westminster Hall, Wednesday, 8th July 1891.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE MARQUIS OF HARTINGTON, M.P.
MR. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

Mr. W. ABRAHAM, M.P.
Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Sir EDWARD HARLAND, Bart., M.P.
Sir WILLIAM T. LEWIS.
Mr. E. TROW.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.
Mr. J. C. BOLTON, M.P., Mr. TOM MANN, and Mr H. TAIT (Group B.), and the Right Hon. Sir JOHN GORST, Q.C., M.P., and Mr. M. AUSTIN (Group C.) also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Joint Secretaries.

Mr. WILLIAM HAMMOND PATTERSON called and examined.

Mr. *Dale*.

1. You are the secretary of the Durham Miners' Association?—I am.

2. And also the secretary of the Durham Federation?—Yes.

3. And you have held either that office or an office akin to that for many years?—I have held office in the society ever since it commenced, that is, about 20 years ago.

4. Prior to that time you had practical experience in the working of the mines in the county of Durham?—I have passed through all the grades up to a stone man.

5. The evidence, therefore, that you are about to give relates to coal mining in the county of Durham?—Yes.

6. What number of persons are employed in that branch of industry, that is, in coal mining, in the county of Durham?—As near as I can calculate about 70,000.

7. About what number of members are there in your union?—About 48,000.

8. No women, I think, are employed in the county of Durham in the coal mines?—None, that we know of.

9. Do you desire to make any statement to the Commission in regard to wages, their amount, fluctuations, or anything else?—I have a written statement about that, a copy of which I forwarded to the secretary. I can read it, if you like, but I could not give it from memory.

10. You have included, or rather I should say, the Durham Miners' Association has included, in the written information that it has supplied to this Commission, a statement showing the fluctuations in wages since 1872. I do not know that it is necessary to put any question upon that?—I might say that if it would be any benefit to the Commission I could recapitulate how these changes had been brought about.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

11. If we should find that necessary we will take advantage of your willingness, to supply the further information. What relationships, if any, exist officially between the Durham Miners' Association and the Durham Coal Owners' Association?—There is existing what we call a joint committee, composed of six men representing the owners and six men representing the workmen, of which the county court judge of Durham is chairman, and has a casting vote on all points of dispute. This joint committee simply takes up local questions, not general questions. When a general question as to the alteration of hours or wages, any question affecting the whole county, arises, it is taken up, generally speaking, by the Federation board on the one side, which is composed of the miners, the mechanics, the engine men, and cokemen, and a special committee, or a full meeting of the owners representing the Durham Coal Owners' Association; it is there where the general questions are settled, all the local disputes go to what is termed the joint committee.

12. Will you put in a copy of the joint committee's rules?—Yes (*handing in the same*).

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

13. This joint committee affords a court by which all local questions as distinguished from those affecting the customs or the wages of the whole district can be regulated?—Can be regulated by themselves or referred to what we call local arbitration; that is another mode of settlement by one man chosen by the owners of any particular colliery or portion of the colliery, and one particular man chosen by the men working at the said colliery. If they disagree then that is referred to what we term an umpire, or an independent man, to settle the dispute. That is what we call local arbitration.

14. I think you said that the joint committee was presided over by the county court judge?—Yes.

15. Has he a casting vote?—He has a casting vote.

16. Then the references to arbitration arise because the matters perhaps require a visit to the colliery and cannot be fully inquired into at the meeting of the joint committee, under the presidency of the county court judge?—It would be impossible to fix the prices of seam and what we call ramble, and bands (that is connected with the coal), at the joint committee meeting, because these places generally want examining, and, at least, it costs three or four hours to make full inquiry before any just settlement can be arrived at, therefore the joint committee in the limited time they have could not do it.

17. Therefore the Commission would be right in understanding that the joint committee is complete in itself, as a body, under the presidency of the county court judge who has a casting vote, capable of deciding at a meeting of the joint committee any question that came before it if that question was not of a character that required investigation on the spot?—That is so.

18. And that therefore the appointment of referees, and by those referees of an umpire, if necessary, really arises in all those cases in which the pit has to be visited and a technical judgment on the spot has to be formed, is that so?—That is so.

19. When there arise any county questions how are they dealt with?—They are dealt with at the present time, as I explained before, by a meeting of the Federation board, representing the men, and a committee of the owners, representing the Durham Coal Owners' Association.

20. Has there been in existence for regulating wages in the Durham coal trade a sliding scale?—I think there have been three.

21. Will you put in the latest sliding scale agreements?—I hand in the series of Durham coal trade sliding scales. First, that of 1877; second, that of 1879; third, that of 1882; and the fourth, of 1884 (*see Appendix* 1).

22. Was the latest sliding scale agreement terminated by due notice from the workmen in 1889?—Yes.

23. And at present no sliding scale exists?—At present no sliding scale exists.

24. Since the expiration of the sliding scale how have the wages been arranged?—By negotiation.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

25. Is the mode of payment for work underground in the collieries of the county of Durham by piece?—It varies. The hewer, that is, the getter of the coal, is generally paid by the piece. The stone man working what we call bargain work is paid in the same form. Onsetters and banksmen in the same way.

26. It may be said that the greater part of the work done underground in the getting and the loading of coal is paid by the piece?—Yes.

27. What are the hours of the hewers in the county of Durham?—The fixed hours are seven from bank to bank.

28. Has there been a recent reduction in the hours of some of the collieries?—There has.

29. But there are other classes of men working underground whose hours are somewhat longer, are there not?—Yes.

30. Can you tell us approximately their hours?—The stonemen and shifters work eight hours from bank to bank. The onsetters and other men directly engaged in the output of coal work 10½ hours; the boys work 10 hours from bank to bank.

31. Is there any system of payment through sub-contractors?—Not the men who win the coal, except at certain pits.

32. Is there any system of fine?—There only exist acknowledged by the two associations two systems of fines, and that is what we term laid out and set out. For a set out tub either the man has to forfeit all the coal that it contains, or it goes in with the tubs previously weighed and it comes off his average. Most of our men prefer arranging that if the tub is below the standard weight they lose the coal that it contains.

33. Does the set out refer to a tub insufficiently filled?—Yes.

34. And does laid out refer to a tub which contains some impurities?—Yes.

35. Is there any truck system prevailing in the county of Durham or payment in kind?—Not to our knowledge.

36. Is there any system of allowance in case of sickness or accident?—In case of accident there is a general understanding that if a man receives an accident in any form then he is allowed 5*s.* a week, and a boy in general 2*s.* 6*d.*

37. Is there any system of free houses or gardens?—There is. The system of free houses is this, that the colliery owners build, near to the colliery, a large number of houses, and they supply them to the men free; where they have not colliery houses, then a certain amount of rent is allowed so that they can get a house for themselves.

38. Do they get coals free also?—They get coals on paying 6*d.* a fortnight for leading.

39. Any garden ground?—In a great portion of the county there are gardens, but there is no compulsion whatever as to the gardens. If the owner likes to provide them he does so, but so far as the houses are concerned he tenders the money.

40. I do not know whether you have before you the questions that were sent to your association?—Yes, I have them here.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

41. Will you kindly look at page 3, the questions as to the conditions of labour. Are there any questions under that head that you would desire to offer any observation upon. It appears to me that until you come to K. all the others seem to have been already covered by the answers that you have given to my questions. Have you any evidence you desire to lay before us under K. ?—I think, probably, our financial secretary, Mr. Wilson, M.P., will give the best evidence on that point, because he has the figures to tell you what the facts are, but I might just make one remark, that only within the last month one of our local secretaries was dismissed; he went to another colliery, and as they got to know his name by some means or other he was dismissed there; he went to another colliery, and as soon as they got his name he was dismissed there. That just happened this last week. But during the last few years we have not had much trouble in that way.

42. Is that rather exceptional in your experience, recent experience at any rate, in the county of Durham ?—It is.

43. Then still on page 3 you will see "strikes and lockouts;" have you anything you desire to state upon that ?—If we have to go into that it will take a long time. We have no objection to explain any particular one or two. I think I have the history of about hundreds here in brief, but it would take a long time to explain it. If any gentleman wishes to ask about any particular strike I have no objection.

44. Have disputes leading to suspension of work been recently more or less frequent than formerly ?—I think they have been less frequent within this last 12 months.

45. Now, kindly look at page 5, the general questions. No. 1, I think, has been sufficiently covered by the answers you have already given. As to No. 2, "Has any system of co-operative "production, industrial partnership, or profit "sharing, been attempted in your district" ?—None in our district, except in the very early history of our society, I believe, a man of the name of Briggs belonging to a colliery called East Howle tried to introduce co-partnership. Since that time I do not think that there has been any attempt of the kind.

46. On page 6 occurs question No. 9, "Can "you suggest any means of avoiding or arrang-"ing strikes and promoting cordial relations "between capital and labour" ?—The best means that has come under my experience is the sliding scale. I have always believed, long before it was introduced, that it was the safest and most beneficial to all parties concerned, that is, providing you can get an equal and fair basis. The first sliding scale that we had introduced was based on the principle and prices that had been referred to arbitration and decided by such men as Lord Derby and others. I need not repeat the names, all the prices and practices were ascertained; that was the first principle; that worked too well for the men, then the owners gave us notice to abolish it, so we went on

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

47. Then whilst the sliding scale would no doubt avert strikes arising from a dispute as to what the general rate of wages should be, there might still remain other questions in difference between the two parties to a labour contract, questions as to hours, customs, and so forth. What would you suggest as the best mode of avoiding a strike resulting upon those questions ?—The best mode is, when the owners and workmen can mutually agree. That is the first step. Then I say that if you disagree, the next best principle is when two men differ to go to arbitration and let somebody else decide.

48. Prior to the establishment of the joint committee and the official relationships between the Durham Miners' Association and the Durham Coal Owners' Association which have existed now for some years, had strikes been frequent in the county of Durham ?—Yes, I could not repeat them now, but I can tell you some of them. There was a strike at Monkwearmouth and one at Heworth.

49. Are you of opinion that the frank recognition by an owners' association of a miners' association, as in the county of Durham, and the holding of official relationships, has tended to promote harmony, and to diminish at any rate the number of strikes ?—I think it has; in fact, I say it has.

50. Is there any other statement you would wish to make before the members of the Commission cross-examine you ?—Nothing.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

51. I understand from what you last said that in your opinion sliding scales form the best means of averting disputes between owners and workmen in the coal trade ?—Yes.

52. I think you said that there is at present no sliding scale in use in the Durham coal trade ?—No, there is none now.

53. When was the last given up ?—1889.

54. Can you tell us on what ground it was given up ?—Because the men got an idea, and I might say also the officials of the society, that the basis of that scale should be advanced, and the owners and we could not agree as to the advancing of the basis price upon what we call double leads or increased payments when the coal rises to a certain price.

55. How long had that scale lasted ?—I think it was three years.

56. And previous to that, there had been several other scales ?—Yes.

57. Do you remember on what grounds those scales were given up ?—They terminated themselves and were renewed in some instances, except the first and the last. I think the second terminated itself and was renewed by the third, and when the third terminated itself it was renewed by the fourth.

58. When you say terminated by itself, do I understand you to mean that it was renewed on the same basis as before ?—Oh, no, a certain number of years was contained in each scale; some were made for three years, some, I think, have gone on for five years. Then they terminated and so much notice was given by either

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

side; when the fixed time expires, then either party that is dissatisfied gives notice, and if the scale can be renewed it is renewed.

59. But in those cases when the scale was renewed do I understand you to say it was renewed on the same basis as before or upon a different basis?—There are not two scales alike. Of course I cannot remember every basis we have put in the scales. I cannot remember the different terms.

60. Was it in every case the men who objected to the basis when a scale came to an end?—The owners objected in the first instance; then the men objected in the second instance too.

61. Has there been any suggestion that the system of a sliding scale should be revived since 1889?—By a few of the leading men belonging to the Trades Union, but no expression of opinion as coming from the body of either one section or the other, to my knowledge.

62. Then how have wages been arranged since then?—By meeting the owners at various times and discussing the question whether or not there should be a reduction on the price.

63. Were you able to come in each case to a decision without invoking the assistance of an arbitrator?—Yes.

64. The board of conciliation has, since 1889, settled the amount of wages?—Yes.

65. I think you stated that within the last 12 months there had been fewer strikes than previously?—Yes, that is, local strikes.

66. You do not, however, attribute that to the fact that the board of conciliation works better than the sliding scale?—I do not. I think that sometimes circumstances will arise and we cannot help them. I could not really tell you the real cause of these disputes. I might say this, that probably we have during the last 12 months made our resolutions a little bit stronger and more formal—the resolutions that we have sent to the men themselves. That has had its effect. We have used our influence in the matter.

67. But you personally would be glad to see a sliding scale re-established?—Yes, if we could agree upon the basis of it.

68. When you say agree upon the basis, do you mean upon the principle or upon the amount?—It is the amount.

69. You are agreed about the principle?—We are agreed about the principle, but not upon the details.

70. On what principle have these sliding scales been based?—On the principle of the selling price of coal at the pit bank, with certain deductions made for freights and house coal, and that kind of thing. It would take a long time to tell you.

71. Have any other considerations besides the selling price of the coal been introduced?—Not to my knowledge.

72. For instance, the condition of the labour market has not been taken into consideration?—No.

73. When it has been thought requisite to alter wages, either on one side or the other, has that arisen from the fact that under the sliding scale no allowance has been made for such considerations as the state of the labour market?—No, I do not think so. I think that the whole abolition of the sliding scale is attributed to this one fact, that the base wage of each scale, that is the starting-point of each scale, has been reduced by about 10 per cent.—that is what we say. Of course the owners say now that it is not 10 per cent. Although they have agreed to the sliding scales, under pressure (that is the reason, I believe), it has never satisfied them, and they have never been satisfied since that 10 per cent. reduction came about.

74. Do I understand you to say this, that you take as the basis a standard price of coal, and a standard wage corresponding to that?—Yes.

75. I want to get exactly at the nature of your complaint against the basis of the sliding scale, which has been in use but has become disused. Is it that the standard wage, as compared with the standard price, has, in your opinion, been fixed too low?—That is exactly it.

76. Then upon each occasion have you attempted to establish a new standard wage in relation to the standard price, by means of arbitration?—We have not had anything to do with arbitration in fixing the sliding scale. There is no umpire in regard to the sliding scale. We either agree amongst ourselves or disagree.

77. In no case, then, in the Durham coal trade, have a standard price and a standard wage—that is to say, the basis of your sliding scale—been fixed by arbitration?—No, in no case.

78. You have made no attempt to fix the basis by arbitration?—No, never.

79. Do you think there would be an advantage in attempting to fix it by arbitration?—I do not think we could get the workmen to do it. The fixing of the terms of the scale would then be left entirely in the hands of the umpire, and it would be a long time before we could educate them up to that. In fact, they would not let the fixing of the sliding scale, in my opinion, go into anyone's hands.

80. What is their objection to that? Can you tell me?—They object as a matter of principle. They say, before that scale is fixed it must be submitted to us. We must have a word in it. We are the men who have to work under it. It is not like submitting a pure and simple question of 5 or 10 per cent., but it is submitting a principle, and we have never yet let loose of it, scarcely even into the hands of the Federation Board.

81. When you say that they have not yet been educated up to that point, do you contemplate the time when they will be educated up to that point?—No, I have no idea that they ever will be.

82. But you think that it is a desirable point to reach. You think that if they could be induced to submit these matters to arbitration, it would be an advantage?—I would not, so long as I am engaged in the capacity I am now engaged in, ask the men to do it.

83. The Chairman suggests to me that the objection of the men arises principally from the fact that an umpire's decision would have to

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

last a very considerable period?—They object to the principle altogether.

84. They object to the principle of arbitration?—No; to the principle of allowing the fixing and regulation of wages by a sliding scale to go out of their hands entirely.

85. They object to sliding scales on whatever basis?—No.

86. I am not sure I understand you?—The first objection is that the basis of the scale is too low. The second objection is that the advance in wage is not proportionate to the advance in the price of coal. As I say, we have never asked the men yet, but I am only anticipating what they would say. They would not allow one man to fix that price. It is too large a question for one man to fix, and therefore it must be fixed by negotiation, and I would venture to say almost that that is the only way it can be fixed.

87. Perhaps I shall be travelling beyond your province in asking you this question: In other coal fields is there a system of arbitration established to fix the sliding scale?—Not to my knowledge.

88. You do not think that arbitration is employed anywhere in the coal trade to fix the basis of the sliding scale?—Not to my knowledge. I never heard of it.

Mr. *Burt.*

89. With regard to sliding scales, I understand from you that nothing has altered your opinion as to the desirability of a sliding scale, provided a proper basis, or a satisfactory basis, could be secured?—That is so.

90. That, in fact, a sliding scale is a desirable mode of adjusting wages?—I think that it is not only desirable, but that it is the best.

91. You have no women employed about the mines in the county of Durham. Is there any strong desire on the part of the miners to have their wives and daughters employed or on the part of their wives and daughters to be employed, about the mines?—I do not think that I need say more than one word in answer to that question. I say there is no desire.

92. They do not feel it a great hardship to be deprived of any addition to their wage that they might have consequent upon such employment?—No, not at all.

93. You mentioned that you have had a good many strikes of late. Do you think that you have had more or fewer than you had prior to the establishment of the Union?—I think we have had fewer. Remember, I was not very old then. But I know that there were a good many strikes before the present Union commenced, and that it was through the number of strikes, and the dissatisfaction that existed at the collieries, that the present organisation sprung up.

94. Can you explain to the Committee how it is that you should have local strikes in cases in which, I assume (if I am not correct you will tell me), that the miners are members of your Union, and the coal owners are members of the Coal Owners' Association, and when it is agreed that your local disputes shall be settled by the

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

joint committee?—There are two or three answers to that question. The first and most important answer is that during the last two or three years the owners and managers have not settled the local questions which they were prepared to settle formerly. Sometimes at one of those sittings the committee will have 150 cases—let me keep within bounds—above 100 cases, at any rate, to dispose of. It is practically impossible to dispose of them, and, therefore, the local grievances that exist in the collieries, instead of being settled as they ought to be settled, within six weeks, are not settled sometimes within six months. Lately, I think, we have had two or three very large strikes about very trifling things. The owners have increased the allowance to the members, and they have increased the disposition for the members not to give in.

95. Yours is a large county, and I gather from your last answer that the joint committee is somewhat overburdened with work?—That is so.

96. May I infer that if it were possible for the joint committee to deal more quickly and more fully with these cases, the strikes would diminish in number?—That is my opinion. In fact, it is my practical experience. We have, for instance, one district where the cases are very few, and in that district they very rarely have a local dispute. They sometimes have one, but you cannot help that. But in other districts where what we call agenda of the committee is so large and has so many cases upon it, the men get impatient and they come to a dead lock.

97. Do strikes occur frequently from employers refusing to carry out the decisions that may have been given by the joint committee?—Well, they are about equally balanced, I think; the one side refuses just as much as the other.

98. Then, in case of the workmen refusing to carry out a decision that may have been given by the joint committee, do the workmen representatives on the joint committee, and your association, feel morally bound to do what they can to enforce the decision?—At one time we used to attend the collieries, and attend the meetings to try and enforce the decisions, and we were often successful; but now, as I have said, the rule laid down is most stringent, that if men transgress the law they have to get out of it the best way they can. They are written to or wired to at once, telling them they are wrong. The committee is called, and the committee passes a resolution which is forwarded to the men telling them that they are wrong. That is our mode at the present time.

99. You mentioned the dismissal of a secretary or leading man connected with your association, and you stated that he had great difficulty in getting employment elsewhere, owing to the prominent part he had taken in connexion with your association?—That is so.

100. You also stated, in answer to the Chairman, that what we call victimising of that sort is rather exceptional now?—It is; we very seldom have cases like that now.

101. It was much more frequent, I suppose, some years ago?—I have known us to have at

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

one committee meeting 70 men—Mr. Wilson will have the figures to prove to you—travelling about seeking work, for the simple reason that they have been active men in the Durham Miners' Association.

102. Was this case brought, or was it competent for you to bring it, before the joint committee?—No, they will not discuss the question of notices. It is not within their jurisdiction. The owners claim the right to dismiss any men they like. They claim that right and employ the men in that way; and the right is conceded on the other side.

103. Still, from what you say, that is quite an exceptional case, and the relationship, speaking generally, between your association and the Owners' Association, is, if not entirely satisfactory, much better than it was. In fact, may we say that, on the whole, it is a good relationship?—Taking the owners of the county of Durham, and the workmen as a class, the whole of them, I do not think there is any county that gets on more sociably and more beneficially.

104. Now with regard to the hours of employment. You mentioned that the hours are seven from bank to bank, stonemen and shifters eight hours from bank to bank, onsetters 10½, and boys 10. Can you say approximately the proportion of those working above 10 hours to those working eight and under?—I could not, but just speaking from memory and from what you might call general knowledge of the matter, it is a very small per-centage.

105. Perhaps I need hardly ask you whether you consider it an ideal and satisfactory thing that boys should be working 10 hours when many of the men are working seven?—Well, the difference in the class of labour accounts for it. When a man goes to hew coal he has to use a greater exertion than a boy sitting on what we call the limmers. I do not know that many members of the Commission will understand that, but it is almost like a man sitting on the cart head, or rather instead of sitting on the cart head it is more like sitting on the shafts of a cart. We call them limmers in the mining district. The hewers and stonemen have a great deal more laborious and harder work. That is the only thing that I can say about it, and I believe that rightly speaking, so far as we have felt the pulse of both men and boys, and so far as the hours are concerned, all are satisfied and all are agreed.

106. Do the short hours of the hewers depend on the double shift system?—Yes.

107. Have your men been tested at all, by ballot or otherwise, on the question of an eight hours Act of Parliament, from bank to bank?—It has been before them two or three times, and it has always been decided by an overwhelming majority.

108. Against?—Against it.

109. Some of the advocates of the eight hours from bank to bank suggest a single shift of eight hours. What effect would that have on the county of Durham if it were in force?—It would increase at least every hewer an hour and a half a day. As soon as they got the eight hours they would want in the county of Durham two shifts of men.

110. I am putting to you a single shift?—If it was a single shift of eight hours it would mean an hour and a half a day extra.

111. But would there be room in the pit for a single shift?—There would not be pit room for nearly one half of them.

112. It would involve the dismissal, you say, of half the men?—Half the men.

113. Then as it has been suggested, suppose there were three shifts of men and two shifts of boys per eight hours, and the pits drew coal, say nearly 16 hours per day, would that be a workable solution of the difficulty?—I do not think it would. I think the cure would be worse than the disease, in fact the increased time would be worse than our present mode, and that is the opinion of all the men, so far as I know it.

114. My question, of course, is based on the assumption that in itself, if it were practicable without involving greater evils, it is a desirable thing to reduce the hours of the boys to eight per day, but I gather from your evidence that in your opinion, and in the opinion of those you represent, it is believed that the change will involve greater evils than it would remove?—Yes, that is so.

115. Would it be true to say that you have made no attempt to reduce the hours of the boys?—Most decidedly it would not. The hours of the boys when I worked in the mine, and for some years after, were nearly 14 a day. We used to commence to go down at half-past 3 in the morning, and we were never out of the pit before between 5 and 6 o'clock at night; that is, the whole of us. We never used to see daylight from one fortnight's end to another. Now the longest hours that a boy can stop is 10 hours from bank to bank.

116. Will you state what are the hours of employment of boys. When do they begin, and when do they stop?—Six o'clock in the morning to 4 o'clock at night, except on Saturdays, and on Saturdays it is about eight hours, I think, upon an average.

117. Have you recently endeavoured, and with some amount of success, to further reduce the hours of the boys?—Last year the hours of both men and boys were reduced by an hour per day in three-fourths of the collieries.

118. The miners of the north have been commented upon rather severely on account of leaving the boys in the pit when they come home; is that correct?—Certainly not.

119. Those who leave the boys in the pit have gone underground a few hours before the boys?—The men who leave the boys in the pit go in some hours before them, and the men that stay with the boys come in and do their work in the face, that is, in the coal working.

120. And then in the back shift the men, I presume, allow the boys to come up before them, as a rule?—Yes, and frequently all boys and men working for longer hours have the privilege of taking the cage and coming up to bank before any other men; that is, they are there a shorter time.

Mr. *Trow.*

121. You stated you were in favour of the sliding scale, but that there is less inclination on the part of your men to submit the basis of the scale to an arbitrator?—Yes.

122. Are the whole of the coals produced in your district taken at the ascertainment, or only a certain portion of them?—Only some portion of them. There is a certain portion kept out, but I may say that so far as that is concerned, I think the owners should arrange that.

123. When you had no scale you settled by negotiating upon those lines; now upon what basis is your negotiation?—So far as we are concerned by the public quotations on the public markets.

124. That is the selling price?—Yes, the selling price.

125. The scale is the selling price, and when you repudiate a scale and do not negotiate with the employers, but go before an umpire, the selling price is the guide that enables him to come to a decision?—I do not know that. Of course it is one element that is put before him. I admit I do not know that it enables him to come to a decision.

126. You stated that in your scale the value of the labour is not taken into consideration, only the value of the coals; but you say the owners gave notice to terminate the first scale?—Yes.

127. Did not the owners give notice to terminate the first scale because in the then existing condition of trade the basis was too high?—That was the fact.

128. When you adopted that scale there was a demand for labour?—I think there was a fair average demand at the time that the scale was adopted.

129. When it terminated the conditions of the trade would be worse?—When it terminated, yes. When the owners gave notice of the termination of that scale, I do not know how many men we had on the funds, but we had a tremendous lot. There were a number of pits laid in.

130. You say in every case the condition of the labour market when you go before the arbitrator is taken into consideration; do you always find when the market is good, and prices are running up, that the employers are more ready to grant a higher basis?—You will understand this, that when you settle, either by negotiation or arbitration, you only suit a portion.

131. If your men were agreeable to have an umpire and let him take the relative rate of wages in comparison with the realised price over a period of 10 years, taking into account the negotiation periods, the umpire decision periods, do not you think that then, over a period, he would be able to give a fair basis that would give as much as any negotiation or umpire?—If they were sure that the umpire they got would give them their own way, not without it. I think I have answered that question sufficiently.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

132. There is one question I am deeply interested in, and that is the dismissal of your officials?—Yes.

133. I recognise the right of every employer to give a man notice, or of a man to give notice to his employer to leave, that is ordinary workmen; but do not you think there should be some protection for the men who are elected to represent the workmen?—I think they ought to be protected.

134. Your opinion is, that the benefit that might be derived from your joint committee or federation board is minimised owing to these men being dismissed, if they take prominent action?—Yes, I think there should be some mode of settling. Of course, I may say this, Mr. Chairman, even to yourself, when we have sometimes had to appeal in cases of this kind you have always listened, and so have some other owners; but the man, for instance, that I was talking about said, "I would prefer not to have my name exposed." Sometimes these men prefer to do that, because you know, if a manager does not want a man, he can soon find fault with him.

135. You are convinced if there were some protection and recognition of these men there would be less disputes and difficulties in your districts than at present?—I think so.

Mr. *Abraham.*

136. Where, under your scales, were the prices of coal taken which formed the basis upon which wages were raised, at pit's mouth?—At pit's mouth.

137. Would there be any objection to your stating what were the prices of coal formed on the last basis?—To answer it shortly, 3*s.* 10*d.* is the best price for the coal, and the average wage for the workmen 4*s.* That is for the hewing, and for every 2*d.* advance there was 1¼ per cent.

138. What was the average price of coal at pit bank which formed the basis?—Do you mean the average price for the whole time?

139. No, the price which formed the basis of the scale?—(Mr. *Wilson.*) 3*s.* 10*d.* was the price at the pit mouth.

140. The selling price of coal?—(Mr. *Patterson.*) Yes, at the pit mouth.

141. What wages would that give to the workmen?—(Mr. *Wilson.*) 4*s.*

142. What per-centage in wages would the workmen receive upon 1*s.* of advance in the price of coal in the market?—(Mr. *Patterson.*) It is an advance of 1¼ per cent. on every 2*d* of increase in coal. It can be worked out directly for you, if you like.

143. That would be, how much?—7½ per cent. for every 1*s.*

144. That would not be the whole per-centage received, would it; at what point in your scale would you receive an additional per-centage?—In one or two places there is what we call, as I have explained, double jumps, where there is an increase of per-centage given when the coal rises to a certain point.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

145. And that would increase the average something about the 7½ per cent. which you have stated ?—Yes.

146. What would be the general average of per-centage which the miners would receive in wages over all the scale on 1*s.* in advance ?—7½ per cent.

147. Do not you receive 7½ per cent. on the first 1*s.* ?—Yes.

148. Then was not there an extra advance on the next 4*d.* ?—(Mr. *Wilson.*) Not the next 4*d.*

149. Should I be right if I put it in this way, was it 9 per cent. that your scales gave you on an average in wages on every 1*s.* of advance in the ton of coal ?—(Mr. *Patterson.*) Except at that one particular point. (Mr. *Wilson.*) If I might be allowed to say, it would be 7½ for the first 1*s.*, and it would be 8¾ for the second 1*s.* I have just run the 2*d.* down.

150. I should not like you to do an injustice to your own scale, and, I will ask, does it not advance more than that at any other period ?—In the second shilling it advances one jump.

151. What would it be on an average all through, from bottom to top. Would it not be 9 per cent. ?—No.

152. What would it be ?—It would not be above 8.

153. Did your scale give the same per-centage of advance on the wages of all classes of workmen ?—(Mr. *Patterson.*) The last scale did—the previous scales did not.

154. Do you consider that an improvement in the last scale over the other scales ?—Decidedly.

155. When you said that the state of the market was not taken into consideration in forming the basis of scale, are we to take it that you meant that the supply and demand for labour were not taken into account ?—If the price of the article goes down, then the number of men are never taken into any account. It was the price, and the price only, that we went on.

156. Then, generally speaking, the state of the labour market was not the consideration ?—Not to my knowledge.

157. As a practical Trades Union leader, do you think that is a safe principle to fix the basis of wages upon—not to take into account the state of the labour market ?—If we get a good basis, it will guide us over good times and protect us in bad. That is what I said it did before, and would again.

158. Is it not the fact, if this item is neglected, that it gives occasion for the employers at one time to terminate the scales, and the workmen at another to do the same thing ?—Most decidedly.

159. Then, were it possible to take that element into consideration, it would have the result of making the scales work more permanently ? — In my opinion, I do not think it would. I think it would lead to endless discussion—that one would say that the labour market was not overstocked, and another would say it was, and we should get into an endless discussion upon no real practical basis. That is my opinion; I may be wrong.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

160. In your opinion, independent of the action the men are taking, is it or is it not desirable that the basis of the scale should be formed by arbitration ?—I have answered that question. I will answer it again. In my opinion, the basis of the scale should not be settled by arbitration.

161. Perhaps you will inform the Commission now as to the hours worked; you have already informed us that they are working 7½ hours from bank to bank ?—Seven; I made a mistake.

162. What time of the day does the first shift begin ?—Four o'clock in the morning.

163. It goes up at what time ?—They vary. Some commence to go down at 10. I should think they would all be up by about 11.

164. The first shift goes down at 4 o'clock in the morning ?—Yes

165. The second shift goes down—— ?—At half-past 9; that is the regular time.

166. The boys, you said, going down at 6 o'clock in the morning ?—Yes.

167. And up at 4 ?—Yes.

168. For how many days in the week ?—Five days in the week.

169. Then, on Saturdays, when are they going down and coming up ?—The general thing is two hours less, that is eight hours on Saturday.

170. That would mean they work 58 hours ?—58 hours. (Mr. *Wilson.*) Not for the boys under 16. (Mr. *Patterson.*) The Government have protected the lads under 16. Their hours are fixed by Act of Parliament, and I understand your question had relation to boys that were above the age protected by Act of Parliament.

171. I wanted to find exactly what number of hours these boys did work; can you inform us what per-centage of the labour employed in the Durham coal field are working 58 hours a week ?—Do you mean of the boys ?

172. The per-centage of the whole labour employed. I know you have given this before, but we were in another conference, and I should like this Commission to have the benefit of the fact ?—I answered that question before. But I am quite willing to answer it again. I said the strict per-centage I could not give; I cannot make figures.

173. Is it about 7½ or 10 per cent. ?—I could not tell you, or else I would. I keep nothing back. I said it was a very small per-centage according to my knowledge, in answer to that question.

174. What is the character of the work done by these young persons that are working these number of hours ?—Some of them are trapping; some are putting; some are flatting; some are driving; and I should have to get the book to give you a complete list.

175. What would the putters be doing ?—The putters are the persons who take the coal from the face to the flat.

176. A putter would be pushing the tram before him ?—If he had not a pony to pull it.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

177. Then he would be driving?—No, putting; there is more pony putting in our county than there is hand putting.

178. Do you consider that that work is not hard work?—I do not consider it easy work, but it is not as hard or as laborious as coal hewing.

179. You do not consider it easy work?—No, certainly not.

180. Is it dangerous work?—So far as I know it is not more dangerous than any other work in the mine.

181. What efforts have been made, if any, to reduce the hours of these boys, or young persons I should call them; you said it was desirable that they should be reduced?—I said they had been reduced an hour during the last year. That was the reply I made to that, that the majority of them had been reduced from 11 to 10 hours, or upon an average an hour a day taken off them.

182. We understand that previous to the last year these young men doing this kind of work, were working 64 hours a week?—They were working 11 hours a day.

183. That is 66 hours a week?—There was a short Saturday.

184. That would be 64?—Yes.

185. Then are we to understand that up to within one year all young persons in Durham were working 64 hours a week?—(Mr. *Wilson.*) Not all. (Mr. *Patterson.*) Not the whole of them.

186. A large portion then?—Yes.

187. The majority of them?—Yes, the majority of them.

188. How far have the efforts put forward last year been successful. Has it covered the whole coal field or a few collieries only?—A certain portion had been ever since the passing of the Mines Regulation Act working 10 hours. Previous to that time there was an agreement made between the owners and us for a 10 hour system. That was conceded, but owing to pressure of circumstances we have brought it back to our former principle. That is about as much as I can tell.

189. Was it general, or one or two collieries?—(Mr. *Wilson.*) About 130 collieries. (Mr. *Patterson.*) It was general.

190. And the success was equally general?—The success was equally general.

191. Then you said that some time ago these young persons were working 14 hours a day, as I understand?—Between 13 and 14.

192. How long has it taken you in the Durham district, by the present mode of dealing with the hours question, to reduce the hours of these young persons from between 13 and 14 a day down to 10 a day?—I would say a good deal less time than it would have taken us by any other method.

193. Will you kindly tell us, to the best of your memory, if you do not know exactly, how long it has taken the district to reduce the hours from 13 and 14 to what they are now?—It has taken us about 17 or 18 years.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

194. With respect to the housing of the workmen, are all classes of workmen in and about the colliery provided with houses?—Not all.

195. What classes are excluded?—I do not think the coke men are provided. I want to qualify that answer if you will allow me, because in some collieries every man is provided with a house, it does not matter what he is working at. At other collieries—there are one or two exceptions—they do not provide them with houses. Now, when I answered you the question that coke men are not provided with houses, understand that at some collieries they are provided with houses, the same as the miners.

196. With respect to the cropping, did I understand you to rightly to say that when tubs were improperly filled all the coal contents were grabbed or taken away from the owner of that tub?—It was either put into the general average, and he got every ounce of coal that was contained in the tub, or there was another way, the man, choosing the least of the two evils, would rather sacrifice that tub than have the average of the whole of the coal that he had produced reduced. Of course, he would get it either way he liked.

197. I should like to know what is the custom?—If the tub is insufficiently filled, it is set to one side, and the man gets nothing for it; but if, on the other hand, he does not want that system, but he wants to have that coal averaged with all the other tubs that he has filled that day, he is allowed the same privilege. He is allowed that privilege. He has his choice. More than that: when the question of average wage comes to a point, it is not included in his average wage; it is deducted from his average wage, that is, if there is any question in dispute—if the colliery is seeking an advance at the joint committee, then deductions are not taken off the average wage.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

198. In order to be quite clear as to the hours of labour of boys, I would ask, am I right in saying that the Mines Regulation Act provides that boys under a certain age shall not work more than 54 hours a week?—That is so.

199. I think we have no right to assume that people in Durham do not abide by that Act?—We keep that Act strictly.

200. That being so, boys must be above the age named in the Act, if they are working more than 54 hours a week?—That is correct.

201. I do not quite understand as regards the average selling prices fixing the wages by scale. I think you said that the published prices only were taken?—Not in governing the sliding scales. These prices are taken out by the accountants, one representing the owners and the other representing the workmen. The quantity of coal raised at each pit is properly checked. The result as to the price obtained by the owners is properly checked, and then certain deductions are allowed, so as to get to the nett average selling price that the coal sold at.

Sir *William Lewis.*

202. You told us you represented 48,000 miners; are the numbers in your association on the increase or decrease? I think that during the last year we have increased; not so much that the quantity of men employed have increased, as we scarcely could increase, because nearly all the men and boys that belong to the mines in and about Durham are connected with the four associations, that is, either with ours, which is a large one, with the mechanics, with the engine men, or with the coke men, all four being federated, and with all the four associations together we could not grow much, because nearly every man is in.

203. I take it in many collieries there are a number of people in your association and a number of workmen who are not in the association?—There are very few men that are outside.

204. Have you any difficulties at all as to the unionists and non unionists working together?

So far as working together is concerned, none.

205. You mentioned that at one time when a number of the collieries were idle you had a large number of workmen on your funds; do you support workmen who are idle through want of employment owing to bad trade?—At that time there existed what we call a relief fund, which does not now exist, and every man who was off work was allowed so much, and every boy was allowed so much. Mr. Wilson will give you the exact figures upon that point.

206. Then with reference to your provident fund, you told us what colliers received in case of accidents, and also boys?—Yes.

207. Do you get contributions from the owners of collieries or from landlords towards that fund?—That is money that we never save. It is directly paid as a gratuity by the owners to those persons that are labouring in the mine. We never handle them.

208. There is no regular per-centage paid by owners having regard to the amount contributed by the workmen, is there?—No, not to us. We have a very large sick fund connected with our society, and Mr. Wilson will supply you with the figures connected with that.

209. My inquiry has rather reference to the accident fund. (*Mr. Wilson.*) I can give you the figures with regard to the permanent relief fund. (*Mr. Patterson.*) 5*s.* and 2*s.* 6*d.* is given direct out of the owners' pockets to these men. Not a penny comes from us, or any other source.

210. That, I take it then, is one of the conditions of labour?—It is an old custom that has existed in the county of Durham ever since the oldest man that I know of can answer for.

211. Then it is one of the privileges, the same as the free houses?—We do not think it is much of a privilege, but we would not like to lose it, for all that.

212. Did I understand you to say that free houses are given to single men as well as to married men?—No, there are houses given to single men except under special conditions. There are single men who have houses where they have a widowed mother, or probably three or four brothers, or where they have lost their wives. Under such circumstances there are single men who have houses; but the arrangement is for married men.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

213. With reference to the sliding scale, if I correctly understood the replies you gave, you seem to think that the Durham miners will not entrust the settling of the basis of a scale to any independent person?—That is my opinion.

214. Do they not, as a rule, empower representatives in dealing with their employers to commit them to any arrangements?—Sometimes they do, and sometimes they do not. Often the suggestions that come from the two joint committees, that is, the representative of the owners and the workmen, are submitted to the members for their approval; and when we get close together, probably they will say, now there is a certain difference between you, make the best of the bargain you can.

215. Who decides as to whether questions shall proceed to arbitration or not in connexion with the board of federation and the committee of employers?—That question is always submitted to the members of each society, and each lodge, of which we have over 200, instructs its representative; and then we have what we call a council meeting; and the question is discussed in this council meeting, and the majority decide the question.

216. Suppose, for instance, that the owners representatives resist the suggestion of going to arbitration, and the workmen's representatives desire that the questions that cannot be settled between the board of federation and the committee of employers should go to arbitration, what would happen?—I think my answer, if you have taken notice of it, is correct. It goes directly from the members. It is submitted to the members again after the two committees meet. Then, as I said before, there are over 200 lodges, and each lodge has a representative, and these representatives meet in what we call our council meeting and then we receive our instructions direct from the members through the representatives.

217. Is there no power of discretion left to you as representing them to do what you consider is best for the workmen?—It generally ends in that, because as soon as the representatives obtain what they think a fair offer from the owners' committee, then both the committees generally agree to recommend their members to accept it; and it is generally done so. Sometimes we get free hands; their committee and our committee or federation board have free hands, and we settle the question.

218. You mentioned a large number of cases that are submitted to the joint committee, that is to say, local questions?—Yes.

219. Have you had sufficient experience to say whether the fact of the existence of such a committee has or has not been a temptation to bring disputes from the various collieries?—I think not

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

220. Did not these questions formerly result in being left entirely to the manager of the colliery and the men in the mine?—Before the Union or Durham Miners' Association commenced the manager just told the men, "I want a cer- "tain seam commenced: the price for that seam "is 6s.; if you do not take it, you must leave." If a man had, say, yard work deducted off his wages, and he went to the overman or manager, and he said it was not due, the man never got it. That was the way it was settled before the society existed. We should not like to go back to that day.

221. I understand your answer to apply rather to new work than to work arising from day to day in an established colliery?—The joint committee have very little to do with fixing new work. If there is so much wage kept off a man, and a man feels that he is justly entitled to that wage, and the manager refuses to pay him that wage, then, if we as the officials of this society cannot agree with the manager to pay it, it is left to the county court judge. It would take a lot of time to explain it to you, but these are nearly all disputes as to money that is due to the men: the manager has not paid them so and so. They try to settle it, if they fail it goes to the joint committee for settlement.

222. They are not questions then that are usually left to the discretion of the manager of the pit responsible for the safety of the mine?—No, nothing at all about questions of life or safety at all. We, as an association, never interfere in those. That is always the duty of the Government inspector.

Mr. *Dale.*

223. Do you put in a set of joint committee minutes?—I have not a set with me, but I have no objection to one being put in if it can be obtained.

Sir *William Lewis.*

224. I should like to know whether in your sliding scale arrangement you provide for anything more than the fluctuation in wages consequent upon the fluctuation in prices of coal?—There were other things contained in it, such as the hours question.

225. Was there any provision for the settlement of such disputes as I have been alluding to?—No, not in the sliding scale, but in the general committee rules.

Mr. *Dale.*

226. May I take it that what you meant to have said in answer to a recent question by Sir William Lewis was, that the sliding scale provided for wages fluctuating with the ascertained price of coal?—Yes.

227. That it really contained no other provision except that, during its currency, there might be raised certain prescribed questions?—Yes, I think there was only one.

Sir *William Lewis.*

228. Is it the custom generally in Durham that your hewers change in the face?—Generally it is.

229. And the boys?—The boys do not change at all.

230. There is no double shift of boys?—Where there is a double shift of boys their hours are generally less, and it is so arranged that they assist each other to keep the work on continuously, the same as the men.

231. From your experience are there more or less disputes in prosperous or in depressed times in the coal trade in Durham?—My experience is that there are more disputes during periods of depression. You will be convinced of that when you know the amount of money that it costs.

232. With reference to the person whom you said had been dismissed, I take it that it was a man who was in the employment of the owners; he was not a checkweigher?—He was not a checkweigher.

233. He was a man working in a pit or a pit bank, subject to notice in the same way as any other person?—Correctly so.

234. Only you say that he happened to be connected with your association?—Yes; that was not the point that I was exactly bringing that illustration forward for. I wanted to carry that thing further. We say that there should be a right on the part of the owner to dismiss a man and a right on our part to give him notice; but the right was carried beyond that, and another owner had arranged to employ him, but he was informed of it, and he refused to allow him to work. The dismissal was carried further because he was stopped a second time.

235. Then would you wish to limit the power of the owners to give notice to a man whom they did not wish to have continued in their employment?—I do not wish to limit that power further than this. I think it is sufficiently far for any owner to go when he gives a man notice, and that he should not go so far as to try to prevent another owner employing that man, and so starving that man.

236. I gather from your replies to Mr. Burt that you do not think it would be advantageous for the county of Durham if you change from double shift to single shift?—I think not.

Sir *E. Harland.*

237. You are, I gathered, decidedly in favour of the sliding scale as being, if it were possible to be worked, the most likely method of avoiding disputes between the employers and the employed?—Yes; that is so.

238. Do you think there is any possibility however of a sliding scale being framed which could work with any prospect of equity between the employer and the employed in view of the various circumstances under which each colliery, even of the same proprietor, is placed?—I have not the slightest doubt in my mind but what an equitable sliding scale could be arranged that would give equal justice to the manager, and owners, and men.

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

239. Are there not some collieries to your knowledge where it costs the owner very much less to bring to bank the coal than perhaps another colliery on the very same estate?—That is so; but if we had to go into that condition of affairs we would have to have a sliding scale for every colliery; then it might work.

240. Would not that result in the most complicated arrangement as between the proprietor and his men?—I think it would not. My experience tells me that it would give permanent peace and contentment, whereas we are always seeking advances or reductions at the present time.

241. Then if it is a question of the selling price of the coal, I presume, of course, you admit at once it is the nett amount received by the coal owner for his coal?—The nett amount.

242. Are there not some collieries placed so much further away from either a railway or a seaboard as to entail a very much greater cost in that coal before it could be converted into money as against other collieries even in the same county?—Yes; but that would not affect the scale.

243. If the scale, on the one hand, is to be an indication of the selling price, I presume that means the nett price to the owner?—Yes.

244. Then how could you adjust the scale so that the same scale should apply equally in the same district or even to different collieries of the same owner?—Suppose that you are a colliery owner, and you had a short leadage, costing 1*s.* a ton, that 1*s.* would come off there and the balance which was left would be put in as the nett price. Now, if I were a colliery owner, and I had a little bit further to lead than you, then the leadage would come off and leave me the same price—you would all join in one.

245. But would it not necessitate an independent colliery proprietor having his own sliding scale as between himself and his workmen, indicating quite different figures so far as the wages of the men were concerned, because are there not instances, as I have indicated, where one colliery could be worked to more or less advantage than another, and consequently the workmen would require to be content with more or less wages than at another colliery?—You know the sliding scales, putting them together, have governed us for over 12 years; and we find that we all have to give and take; and the give and take principle always has to come to the rescue of any form of arrangement, however carefully and justly considered; you could not establish a sliding scale that would do equal justice to all and equal equity to all; it must, in some measure, go upon the give and take principle.

246. Does it not follow, therefore, that they being willing sometimes to give, would be willing to leave it to the decision of some single individual to determine whether they ought or ought not to give?—We agree upon an average wage. Now, if any colliery manager thinks that his mines are worth 1*s.* a day more than the others, because they are under more favourable

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

circumstances, they would never say No; but if he thinks that he should have that 1*s.* taken off and be reduced to the county average, then they either settle it mutually among themselves, or it goes to the joint committee; and then the county court judge says how much of that 1*s.* is to come off. If the whole, then the whole must come off. If a portion of it, then a portion of it.

247. I think you said, where the 1*s.* extra was possible to be earned by the men in a particular colliery in that case the men did not object to take this extra 1*s.*?—No.

248. But where, on the other hand, there were some adverse circumstances in the working of that colliery, and the men, instead of having the advantage of gaining the 1*s.*, were called upon to forego the 1*s.*, then, I gathered from some previous replies to questions put to you, you found the men were not willing to accept the less favourable condition?—That is correct, but understand, these men, as I said before, would refer that to the joint committee, and then the county court judge, sitting as umpire, would decide the question between the owners and us, and the same thing when the workmen were receiving 1*s.* a day more than the average.

249. May I gather from you that the workmen have not objected to the decisions of the county court judge; whilst in your replies to questions put to you by one of my friends on my right you said that the workmen were not willing to bind themselves to agree to the decision of any one man?—That was only in fixing the sliding scale. I said the principle was too large.

250. You spoke about the price of the coal at the pit's mouth when it was 3*s.* 10*d.*; how much out of that 3*s.* 10*d.* went to the workmen?—4*s.* per day.

251. Can you reduce it to so much a ton?—It depends upon the quality of coal. You have coal worked at 3*s.* 6*d.* a ton, and at other prices.

252. When you speak of 3*s.* 10*d.* at the pit mouth, the selling price of the coal, could you state what proportion of that amount goes to the workman in wages?—That I could not.

253. Could you say for argument's sake 1*s.* a ton?—It depends upon the average tonnage. As I say, we could not do that unless we get the whole tonnage prices from every colliery, and add them up and divide.

254. May I put it in another way. Assume that when coal is worth 3*s.* 10*d.* at the pit's mouth, then wages bear a certain proportion to that 3*s.* 10*d.* Then suppose that coal be found, owing to a change in the market, to be worth 4*s.* 10*d.* at the pit's mouth, what proportion of that extra 1*s.* goes to the increase of the wage of the working man?—7½ per cent.

255. Seven and a half per cent. of it goes to the pocket of the workman, and the balance to the proprietors?—7½ per cent. on the net rate. It is only 7½ per cent. on the 4*s.*

256. Then whilst you are in favour of the sliding scale, yet you have admitted the extreme difficulty of putting it on a satisfactory basis;

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

is there any new method by which you would be disposed to adjust it so as to work better?—I could not answer that question, because, so far as I am concerned individually, that would be a question that I would have to have some instructions upon.

257. Have you found that the sliding scale is fairly just at a certain price in the market, but that it is unjust when it goes higher or when it goes lower?—That is a question, too, which I would not commit myself to answer.

258. With regard to hours of labour, you spoke about the boys; may I ask at what age the boys are permitted by Act of Parliament to work?—16.

259. Then you referred to certain boys working 10 hours, as against some of the men working 13 or 14 hours?—(Mr. *Wilson.*) That is 25 years ago.

260. You spoke, at any rate, of the boys working a couple of hours a day more than the men?—(Mr. *Patterson.*) Yes.

261. What aged boys were those?—Above 16.

262. When do they become men?—I became a man when I was 18, because I took to myself a wife.

263. Is there any serving of an apprenticeship, or is there any period of service which the lads must pass through before they are recognised as full grown men?—No.

264. Does their becoming members of an association, or of your society, in any way qualify them to be considered as men?—No.

265. At what period would you say they should cease to be boys and should not work as long as they were previously working?—As soon as a boy gets sufficiently strong he may go to hew coals, and he gets the seven hours. He may be put to stone work, and he gets eight hours, and so on. As soon as he becomes efficient he may be set to work.

266. In that you recognise the physical capacities of the individuals and the ability they have to stand the work?—It is entirely in the manager's hands.

267. What is your view with reference to legislation, because we hear a good deal at the present time about the restriction of hours; are you disposed to restrict the hours of labour to a full grown, powerful young man just the same as you would be disposed to restrict them to a man above 50 or 60 years of age?—I believe that the hours of men, as I have said before, would be better adjusted by themselves and their organisation than they would be by any Acts of Parliament, if such were passed.

268. That is to say, you are not in favour of imperial legislation in the matter of the working hours of the miners?—That is my opinion.

269. With regard to unionists, have you any examples of unionists being engaged in one pit and non-unionists in another?—When we first commenced with our society I daresay we might have had, but that does not apply to our society at all now.

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

270. That is to say, you are not aware of any pits that are worked exclusively by non-unionists?—No, not to my knowledge.

271. Is that circumstance consequent upon any combination on the part of the unionists preventing non-unionists from working in the same pit?—Not to my knowledge.

272. Is there no disposition for the unionists to object to non-unionists working?—They work together.

273. You are aware at the present time of non-unionists and unionists working together?—Yes.

274. Amicably?—Yes, so far as we have them, but they are limited in number.

275. How many unionists do you number in your associations in your district?—I do not know exactly how many mechanics. I should think it would be above 58,000.

276. What number do you think there are of non-unionists down in the pit?—I could not tell. We have no way of recording that.

277. Are there as many as 1,000?—I should think if you take the outside of the pits there would be above 5,000, but if you take inside the mine I do not know that there are many above 1,000, if there are that.

278. Would there be 100 down the mine?—I could not tell. I could not answer that. I do not like to answer unless I can answer correctly.

279. At all events you think there might be 1,000?—There might be.

280. Down the mine and at the bank?—Yes, that is independent of the union.

281. Are you an advocate in any way of the Government being called in to adjust as between capital and labour; and is there any method which you would suggest?—So far as I am concerned, I know of no adjustment that would give satisfaction, but of course a question like that I would have to have correct instructions in order to answer.

Mr. *Dale.*

282. In your evidence you stated that you thought about 70,000 men and boys were employed in connexion with the collieries of the county of Durham?—Yes.

283. And you also stated that your membership was about 48,000, but by that I understand you to mean the membership of the Miners' Association?—Yes, the miners only.

284. So that there is no comparison to be instituted between the 48,000 and the 70,000 as showing what number are unionists and what number are non-unionists?—No, not at all.

285. Because the 30,000, representing the difference between the 40,000 and the 70,000, might be members of the Coke Men or the Mechanics or the Enginemen's Association?—Yes.

286. In answer to a question by Sir Edward Harland as to what proportion of a certain 1*s.* advance which might take place in the average price of coal under the sliding scale would go to the workman, you said 7½ per cent. that the intention is that 7½ per cent. upon the 1*s.* would go; what would go would be

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

7½ per cent. of the labour entering into a ton of coal?—Yes. I think I put that. I said that 7½ per cent. would go upon the labour, upon the standard wage. That is the way I put it.

Sir *E. Harland.*

287. Then assuming that the owner in the market obtained 1*s.* a ton more for his coal, what proportion of that 1*s.* would go to the pocket of the working man?—(Mr. *Wilson.*) That would depend upon the tonnage price per ton that he was getting. (Mr. *Patterson.*) He would get ¾*d.* for every 2*d.* advance in the price of coal; for every 4*d.* he gets 1½*d.*

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

288. About what proportion of the total number of 70,000 persons employed in Durham would be coal hewers?—I should think probably about 30,000.

289. And about what proportion would be stonemen and shifters, who work eight hours a day?—I really cannot answer that question. I could get it and send it to you, but I really have not it with me.

290. There are not nearly so many stonemen and shifters as there are hewers?—No.

291. At what time do the pits commence running at Durham?—Commence at 6 o'clock in the morning, about a quarter past 6.

292. They commence drawing coals at about a quarter past 6?—Yes.

293. At what time do they close?—Four o'clock is the time.

294. When do the enginemen commence?—They have three eight hour shifts, the winding engine-men.

295. Does that apply to the engin men all round, the eight hour men?—No. There are various kinds of enginemen. There are locomotive engine-men, and there are fan engine-men, and there are hauling engine-men. But the winding engine-men are all eight hours, and there are three eight hour shifts, and that covers the 24 hours. The others you will probably get better from the enginemen's secretary. I suppose there is some suggestion that the engine-men's secretary will be called, and he will give you the details in reference to that. But that is the principle, that the hauling engine-men have 10 hours and the winding engine-men eight. I do not know what the others have.

296. The hauling engine-men are at the bottom of the shaft?—That is the engine that is employed in drawing the coals from the face to the shaft.

297. They are employed 10 hours a day?—Yes.

298. What hours do the banksmen generally put in?—One will put in about 10, and the other 10½.

299. The pits run from about 6 o'clock or a quarter past 6 till 4 or 5?—Till 4.

300. Then they are winding-men after that, are they not?—No.

301. They are all up?—Yes; if it takes a certain time for the men to go down it takes a certain time for them to come up, and the general way is that there are two banksmen on the pit bank, and one goes a little later than the other, and stays a little later. You see they work into each other's hands in that way; they work together, I might say.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

302. Between 6 and 4 what stoppage is there for meals?—There is no recognised stoppage for meals. There is always some one to set each man to his meal. It generally varies, I believe, from 20 minutes to half an hour.

303. Are we to understand that every man has got the chance of a meal time of 20 minutes at least?—Yes.

304. Who relieves him; what is the system?—They always have what they call spare men. They send them out during a portion of the day to clean up, to lay some props or plates or waggon-way or some thing, and at a certain time they get the meals, and then at a certain time they relieve the others to get a meal in rotation, so many men relieved off at a certain time.

305. Does that apply to the rolley-way men?—They always have plenty of time to get it.

306. A regular time?—No.

307. How is it arranged?—He arranges it by himself. He always gets his meals at any time that he chooses, except there is an accident.

308. Do you mean always at his own pleasure?—He has always, as yet, found plenty of time to get his meals.

309. But there is no stated time?—No stated time.

310. Is there any stated time for any of these men that work from 6 to 4?—Yes. The boys and a certain class of men always get their meals when the men are changing. That is when the back-shift men are going down to relieve the fore-shift men, that is the time of change; and the deputy sees that the boys get their meals at a certain time, they have generally about half an hour allowed them to get the meal, and then they generally take a little bit more.

311. They do that when the change is taking place?—Yes.

312. And the change takes place about 2.30?—No, the change takes place between 10 and 11 o'clock.

313. The first shift go down at 2.30 a.m.?—It is 4 o'clock; that is the general time; then the next shift goes down at 9.30. As the men are changed, one with another, the boys sit down, and the deputy has charge of them, and generally goes and sees that they are all right, and then he comes back and puts in what we call "cavils." The Commission will probably not understand that term. But there are lots drawn for each boy, and he gets his lot to put the coals or draw the coals from a certain number of men, and then they commence again for the next shift.

314. What do the wages of hewers run to at the present time?—Five shillings and eleven pence is the average.

315. How many days a fortnight?—I could not tell you that; but so far as I know, at the

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

present time the pits are run full time, 11 or 12 days.

316. Is it the custom in some districts to run 11 only?—In some districts it is the custom to work only 11; but at the coking collieries they generally make it 12.

317. In addition to those wages they get a free house?—Yes, generally.

318. What kind of a house, all right?—Some are all wrong; as far wrong as they can be.

319. How are they wrong; will you explain?—They are really not fit for human habitation.

320. Will you explain why they are not?—In the first instance, many of them have bad roofs on. In the next place, there are no channels, no drainage, and no accommodation whatever, and in some places some gentlemen round this table could hardly stand up straight.

321. Is this a cause of complaint among many of the men?—It is.

322. Would they not rather be relieved of the present system and get a proportionate wage?—They would not.

323. They would not?—No, they would not.

324. You think they would rather have these calculated as part of their wages, although the accommodation provided them is very insufficient?—That is in some places. I will put it in this way, that the generality of the houses are fair average working men's houses. But there is a large minority, and especially at the old mines, that really want pulling down and rebuilding.

325. And in cases of difficulty arising, like the instance you gave us, concerning one of the local secretaries, where men have been not only dismissed, but blocked from obtaining employment, does anything in the nature of eviction take place occasionally?—Yes.

326. How does that operate upon the men?—When they receive their notice to leave the colliery they get notice to leave the house, and then, generally speaking, eviction warrants are issued, and what are termed candy-men or loafers are engaged to come and carry the things off.

327. Does not that place your members at the mercy of the employer?—It has not happened very many times. It did not happen to this man I spoke of. He removed himself. In another instance, where it did happen, I should think it would be speaking within bounds to say he was nearly six months in the house after his notice expired, and was supplied with coal from the colliery direct, and allowed to sit rent free for six months. I suppose the manager thought that he had had long enough, and that was the way, it happened.

328. Respecting the coal supplied them, do they pay 6*d.* for the cartage?—Yes.

329. What quality is that coal?—It is like other things, it varies in quality.

330. What is the average?—I could not tell you what the average is, because I have not seen it. Some of it, on a nice windy day, would all be blown away. Sometimes they get the coal as it comes out of the mine. At the majority of places they get what we call nuts, which is a pretty fair class of coal, but not of the best quality.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

331. Speaking generally, it is very smal stuff?—Speaking generally, it is very small stuff.

332. With regard to the stoppages, Mr. Abraham has addressed a number of questions to you, but I do not quite gather what amount of impurity is looked upon as sufficient for the employer to reduce the wage for it. In the neighbourhood of Pelton Fell I spent some little time, and I saw a number of tubs of coal come up in which there were a few pounds worth of impurities. Those were taken out and put in small boxes. Can you tell me what number of pounds of impurity in a ton of coal is sufficient to disqualify a man from receiving his pay?—That varies according to the nature of the seam. It varies from 56 lbs. down to 12 lbs. or 14 lbs. I think that is giving you the two extremes. But these arrangements are always made locally, that is, either by the joint committee or at home.

333. Is it a cause of complaint amongst the men that unfair stoppages take place in this way?—There is some, but not very much, because you must understand this, that every penny taken off is refunded.

334. How and when?—Where the average wage is earned. Supposing that a man has earned 5*s.*, and he is fined 2*s.* for the fortnight when all the men's averages are put together that average is reckoned up and deducted off.

Mr. *Austin.*

335. How long has the Durham Miners' Association been in existence?—About 21 years.

336. You have stated that it took 17 or 18 years to reduce the working hours of boys from 13 and 14 hours to 10½ hours. Would it not also be conducive to further bring them down to eight hours, so that they might have an opportunity of educating themselves and of bringing themselves up to that standard of which you spoke in the early part of your evidence, namely, of educating them to arbitration?—Will the Chairman allow me to say that I cannot tell you how many years it would take to reduce those men who are working for 10 hours a day down to eight. It is entirely with the men when they want a change; in fact, my opinion is that if the men sought the change in a certain way the owners would be too glad to give it without any trouble.

337. I think you have stated that the men are averse to a sliding scale, and also that they are not educated to arbitration?—I beg your pardon. I did not say that.

Mr. *Dale.*

338. What I understood you to say was that you are personally in favour of the resort to arbitration, and so are those whom you represent, if the question were not too large a one to leave to the discretion and judgment of one man; and I think you drew this distinction between the men being unwilling to submit a sliding scale to arbitration, and being quite willing to submit

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

smaller questions to arbitration, that a sliding scale would govern the wages of a large body of men, in fact the whole of the men employed in the county of Durham, for it might be two or even three years, and that that would be so important a matter to put into the hands of one man that on that ground they could not submit the question of a sliding scale to arbitration ?—Yes, that is what I said.

Mr. *Austin.*

339. You stated, I think, that the work of the boys is not easy ?—Yes.

340. Is it dangerous work ?—Every class of work in a mine is more dangerous, generally speaking, than it is at the bank.

341. Are accidents very numerous ?—Not so far as the Durham coalfield is concerned.

342. Are accidents numerous among the boys, I mean ?—I do not think there is any great per-centage of them.

343. Taking into consideration the physical aspect of the boys compared with that of the men, and considering that they have not easy work, do you think that it would be desirable to bring them down to the eight hours ?—I have answered that question. I say no, not at the present time. Mr. Burt put that question to me, and I gave him that answer distinctly, because the majority of our members say no, and I am not here to represent my own opinion entirely, you know.

344. They say no, but they give no further explanation; do I take that as your answer ?—I never asked them

345. Do I take that as your answer ?—What ?

346. That they say no, but that they give no further explanation ?—I could hardly tell you the whole discussion, but I think it lasted more than half an hour when they came to the council meeting.

347. I will not press you more than that, I must take that answer as sufficient. You say strikes were frequent before the Union. At what period had the Union this efficacious effect on strikes ?—From the commencement.

348. From the commencement of the formation of the Union ?—Yes. We commenced in 1869, and I prevented, during that year, at least 30 or 40 strikes.

349. Has there been a gradual less tendency to disputes since the formation of the Union ?—Most decidedly so.

350. In fact, I take it the Union has prevented strikes to a more or less extent ?—To a larger extent.

Mr. *Tait.*

350. You mentioned the hours that the men are presently working. Can you inform the Committee what was the general run of the miners' hours, such as stonemen and pit-men, previous to your Union being inaugurated ?—I should think they would vary a little. I am speaking now about the district that I worked

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

in myself. We used to go down, some of us, at half-past 1, and come out about 11.

352. Might I say you had about 10 hours a day ?—With the coal hewer in some instances it might be that, in some more, in some less; but the average would be fully 10 hours, I should think.

353. And you have been able to reduce, since your society was instituted, the ordinary working day of the hewer from 10 to seven ?—Yes.

354. By mutual arrangement and conference with your employers ?—Yes.

355. Do I take it that in the county of Durham the miners' hours are less than in any other county ?—As far as I know they are. I am not exactly conversant whether Northumberland has got that concession now or not. Mr. Burt could probably give you that information.

356. Can I put it in this way, that in the county of Durham the conditions of labour of the miner are as good, so far as the hours are concerned, as any other county ?—I think they are better.

357. And you have brought about these better conditions for the miner by mutual conference and agreement by the various processes which you have laid in front of the Committee to-day by a joint committee of the federated boards ?—Yes.

358. In reply to Sir William Lewis you stated that strikes were less frequent now than they were; but you also stated, in reply to another question, that you thought that strikes were more frequent when reductions of wages were asked for on the part of the employers as against when advances were demanded by the men. Am I right in thinking that it is your opinion that the men resist reductions of wages with a greater tenacity than the employers resist an advance of wages ?—No; the answer is this: that during depression of trade, when the trade is dull, the owners stop the pit and give the men no choice to work, in some instances; but if they give them a choice they fix the wage and say, "Now we will open the pit if you will work at that price."

359. You have been officially connected with your Union since its inception ?—Yes.

360. And as an official, as a member of a trade organisation, are you satisfied that if the employers of labour in this country along with the Unions, similar to your own, would confer more together upon questions affecting their general interests, then there would be less strikes than have taken place ?—So far as our district is concerned we have not much to complain of, really speaking. I think we have the joint committee, and we have the owners' committees, and we have urgency committees, and we have local arbitrations, and I think that, fairly speaking, we could not complain of that.

361. I will put it in this way: if you had no Union at all in Durham do you think there would be a tendency to more strikes than there have been ?—Most decidedly.

362. Also, in answer to Sir William Lewis, you led the Committee, I think, to believe that the houses of certain men are free, that is, they paid no rental ?—Yes.

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

363. But when you are conferring with the Employers' Association and regulating the wages I take it that the fact of the houses being free is always taken into account when defining the wages?—Oh, most decidedly.

364. So that in fact there is no free house?—Not if you take that into consideration; there is a certain allowance made.

365. Just so; instead of deducting it week by week off the wages it is practically taken off the tonnage rate of the men?—Yes, the standard wage would probably be bigger but for that.

366. I should just wish one more word about the evictions. You had some lately at Silksworth?—Yes.

367. Are the conditions of tenancy of the houses the same, so far as notice is concerned, as that of the workman with his employer, so far as the work is concerned, that is, if a man has to leave his work and get a fortnight's notice, does that also terminate his tenancy of the house?—No.

368. Now, after what has taken place in many parts of your county is there a disposition on the part of your men that some alteration ought not to be made in the law which would not admit of a man, simply because he may have a disagreement with his employer, being turned out of his house?—If I understand you, in evictions if the same process is put in that men can be turned out of any district at any coal mine, supposing a coal owner was to charge a man 3*s.* 6*d.* a week for his house, when he gives that man notice I understand correctly he gives him also a notice to terminate his tenancy.

369. It may be, perhaps, too much to ask you to commit yourself or your association, but I will put it to you personally: do you think that it would be better, in the interests of the men, that he ought not to terminate his tenancy of the house simply because he might have a disagreement with his employer?—I think that, taking it as a whole, although we have had sad evictions and a few cases to complain of, that the tenancy would have to be greatly improved if it is to be put on better principles than the one we have.

370. Therefore you would say that there should be some little alteration. You think there ought to be some little alteration?—Yes.

371. Do you find that the Coal Mines Regulation Act has been strictly complied with in all its various clauses?—Most decidedly not.

372. How many shifts did the miners work when they were working on a 10 hours day; how many shifts per fortnight or per week?—The same as now.

Mr. *Abraham.*

373. Did they work two shifts of 10 hours?—One. Supposing the coal hewers would have 10 hours apiece, two shifts of men went on the same as now.

Sir *E. Harland.*

374. To complete the information which you have just been giving with reference to the workers' hours, may I ask you this: When a pit is opened in most instances is the pit not so completely away from suitable houses for the working men that the owner who owns the pit has, as a matter of course, to also build houses for the pitmen to live in?—I think that is so as a matter of fact.

375. In other words, that he does not build houses with the object of letting them to tenants to pay him rent for them, but he builds the houses as a consequential result of his having had to sink his shaft away from any suitable houses, and it therefore becomes to him an investment of capital for which he receives no direct advantage and does not look forward to receiving any?—It is an investment of capital for the mutual benefit, for the shelter of the workmen and for the workmen to work for the benefit of the colliery.

376. But not with a view of their being a direct advantage to him by letting them as tenements, as it would be in an ordinary town or elsewhere?—I do not know. I think the great benefit is that when he sinks the mine he wants to draw workmen there to make the mine profitable, and that is the reason that he builds the houses.

Sir *William Lewis.*

377. Did I correctly understand you to say that the provisions of the Mines Regulation Act are not observed in the county of Durham?—Some of them are not.

378. By whom?—By both sides.

379. By both sides?—Yes.

380. We are not to take it that that is your general opinion as to the observance of the Mines Regulation Act in the collieries in Durham?—Oh, certainly not, most decidedly not. I should think that we have little to complain of.

381. That would be exceptional both as regards owners and workmen, I take it?—Yes, generally speaking, I think we have little to complain of.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

382. Might I just ask if the failure to observe these provisions has itself been a cause of dispute between employers and workmen?—I distinctly said that there have been a few; that I cannot tell you on which side the balance is, but the question asked was: Was every portion of the Mines Act carried out, every clause of the Mines Act? I said, "Certainly not." That was the way the question was put.

383. I only wanted to know whether any breach of the Act had been a cause of dispute between employers and workmen?—I think not, there have been so few.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. JOHN WILSON, M.P., called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

384. You are a member of Parliament and the financial secretary of the Durham Miners' Association ?—Yes.

385. And you have held either that office or some other executive office for many years in connexion with that association ?—Yes.

386. You have heard the evidence that has been given by Mr. Patterson this morning ?—Yes.

387. May we take it that you generally concur in what he has said ?—Yes.

388. He left you to put before us certain evidence with regard to the financial operations of your association. Would you now kindly do so ?—The figures that I have to submit are certain items of outlay for the years 1880–81 up to 1890 inclusive. I think a request was made by Mr. Burnett that that should be given. I have arranged them in various classes, and I will submit them to you. I can give them each year or each quarter, just as the Commission would require.

389. Yearly, I think, would be sufficient ?—The first that I would mention in relation to the expenditure only covers from 1884 down to 1888, and is what we call our relief expenditure. I might explain to the Commission that this arises from a payment that we make to men in depressed times. Our members in depressed times following 1873 and 1874, up till about 1879, voluntarily levied themselves at so much per fortnight, which was paid over to the men who were out through depression of trade. In 1884 we had a number of men again laid idle, and from that time down to 1888 we have had a number of men and the same voluntary subscription the men took upon themselves, and it was paid. I will mention the amounts. In 1884 we paid for the class of liability that I have mentioned 5,832*l.* 18*s.* 10*d.*; in 1885 we paid 10,902*l.*; in 1886 we paid 11,498*l.* 9*s.*; in 1887 we paid 4,567*l.* 19*s.* 3*d.*; and in 1888 we paid 1,079*l.* 4*s.* 5*d.* Of course at that time the men were then all employed; times became better as men were employed, and, consequently, the relief fund died out. I have a list of the strike payments that we have paid each year from 1881 down to the year 1890. Taking the year 1881 we spent 2,713*l.* 15*s.* 1*d.* for strikes; in 1882 we spent 3,426*l.* 18*s.* 8*d.*; in 1883, 2,005*l.* 16*s.* 10*d.*; in 1884, 2,877*l.* 4*s.* 9*d.*; in 1885, 2,873*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.*; in 1886, 8,155*l.* 4*s.* 3*d.*; in the year 1887, 7,853*l.* 10*s.* 3*d.*; in the year 1888, 2,577*l.* 16*s.* 4*d.*; in the year 1889, 4,593*l.* 8*s.* 8*d.*; and in the year 1890, 10,855*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.* The total sum for the ten years is 47,932*l.* 9*s.* Mr. Patterson mentioned or explained, in relation to the sacrificed members, as we call them. I have a set of figures as to the amounts of money we have paid for this class of liabilities for the same length of time that the other figures relate to, sacrificed members, or in relation to a man that Mr. Patterson said could not get work, and men of

Mr. *Dale—continued.*

that class. In the year 1881 we paid 185*l.* 15*s.* 2*d.*; in 1882, 85*l.* 13*s.*; in 1883, 115*l.* 4*s.* 10*d.*; in 1884, 941*l.* 1*s.* 3*d.*; in 1885, 835*l.* 2*s.* 10*d.*; in 1886, 2,483*l.* 18*s.* 7*d.*; in 1887, 1,497*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.*; in 1888, 779*l.* 10*s.* 11*d.*; in 1889, 258*l.* 15*s.* 8*d.*; and in 1890, 200*l.* 7*s.* 11*d.*; or a total sum of 7,373*l.* 6*s.* 5*d.* I think it is incumbent upon me or anyone who gives evidence of this kind to say that we would not consider that all this money is paid for men that we would say had taken an active part in the Union. I think it but fair to the owners, considering our relations, that that should be stated. I have a paper too in relation to our sick fund, showing the money we have paid for sick. I may say, in relation to our organisation or work, concurrently with it is a sick benefit society on the same lines and conditions as the ordinary Foresters and Odd Fellows and those kindred societies. The same amount of money is paid by way of subscription, and the same amount of benefit is paid out. I have here the year 1881, when we paid 10,167*l.* 12*s.* 3*d.* for death; in the year 1882, 11,461*l.* 10*s.* 2*d.*; in 1883, 19,912*l.* 2*s.* 2*d.*; in 1884, 23,546*l.* 2*s.* 3*d.*; in 1885, 18,581*l.* 0*s.* 1*d.*; in 1886, 32,203*l.* 15*s.* 5*d.*; in 1887, 25,887*l.* 17*s.*; in 1888, 20,017*l.* 17*s.*; in 1889, 13,579*l.* 15*s.* 8*d.*; and in the year 1890, 18,724*l.* 14*s.*; a gross sum of 194,082*l.* 1*s.* 4*d.* These are all the figures. I could give the Commission, if the Commission thought fit, the individual strikes, at least a few of the large strikes, that we consider we have had in the county of Durham, between the years 1881 and 1890, to the end of 1890.

390. I think it would be convenient ?—We had a strike at a colliery called Ushaw Moor. That strike originated out of sacrificing of a man of the name of Wistow. We had some of the men belonging to that strike on our funds for three or four years before they were all employed. Taking the strike altogether, for the number of years that it lasted, it cost us 6,723*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* We had a strike at Vane's Hartley, arising out of an award which was given by the arbitrators, and was not granted in full to the men. It is a small colliery, up towards Barnard Castle. That strike lasted about three years. It cost us about 1,758*l.* 18*s.* We had a strike at South Medomsley, that arose out of a reduction that was claimed, as we considered, unwarrantably. We considered that the men's wages would not allow of a reduction. These men were on our funds, and the remnant of them between three and four years, and it cost us 4,185*l.* 12*s.* 4*d.* We had a strike at a little colliery called Woodlands, where it was a question of wages. The manager would not pay the county average, which we considered he had a right to pay, arising out of the arrangements between the two associations. But here I had better say, by way of an interjection, that it is not an associated colliery, and therefore the Associated Masters were not concerned. It was a colliery outside.

8 *July* 1891.] Mr. J. WILSON, M.P. [*Continued.*

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

391. Would the same remark apply to the Ushaw Moor?—Ushaw Moor and Vane's Hartley and South Medomsley; that remark I now make applies to all those collieries. We paid the Woodlands men (and I may say that those were on strike three years) 4,441*l.* 15*s.* 4*d.* We had a strike at Seaham in the year 1881, which cost us 3,341*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.*; but that strike, I think, arose out of the explosions that happened at that time. The men would not work till certain arrangements were come to. We had a strike at Wearmouth in 1890, which cost us 6,241*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.*, and that was a dispute about hours.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

392. Was that an associated colliery?—Yes, We had a strike at Silksworth in 1889, and a smaller one again in 1886, which, combining the two, cost us 5,096*l.* 12*s.* 8*d.* We have had smaller strikes, which we have not tabulated; but Mr. Patterson took out a list of the strikes, a number of them, which he has here; if the Commission feel inclined we could mention them, and a few other cases if it were necessary.

Mr. *Tait.*

393. Would you give us the cost of the two Silksworth strikes in 1886 and 1889?—The one in 1886 is hardly worth ascertaining the cost, because it is a large colliery with about 1,000 or 1,200 men and boys, and we only paid 21*l.*; it must only have been a few men. But in the other case it was in relation to the night-shift working. The manager asked for the night shift, and the men refused, and the strike resulted. We have had the late strike at Silksworth, of course, which happened a short time ago—at least the evictions were this year—which is not included in this because the return was only asked for up to the end of 1890, and it was not mentioned. These are all the figures I have.

Mr. *Dale.*

394. What is your membership and your subscription?—You mean the labour fund.

395. State it so far as you feel at liberty to do so?—Into the labour fund we pay 7*d.* per fortnight; 6*d.* of that comes into my hands or into the central fund; 1*d.* of the 7*d.* is kept at home for local expenses, being the local officers and petty expenses. The 6*d.* comes into the general fund, and we pay out for that certain benefits; for instance, if there be an accident at the colliery.

396. Would that 6*d.* be available for relief expenditure?—No, the relief fund is not provided for by our rules.

397. That is special?—We arrange a special voluntary levy when such an emergency arises.

398. Would the 6*d.* be available for the sick and death expenditure?—No.

399. That is special?—That is special. To that we pay the same contribution as the ordinary benefit society.

Mr. *Dale*—continued

400. Then it would be available for the sacrificed expenditure?—For the sacrificed expenditure.

401. And it would be available for the strike expenditure?—And strikes and the accidents, breakages, and so forth.

Sir *William Lewis.*

402. Did you say for accidents the 6*d.* would be applicable?—Yes; it provides 10*s.* per week for accidents and for strikes; 10*s.* per week for full member, and 5*s.* for half member.

Mr. *Dale.*

403. Under which of those headings would come the allowances in case of accident?—I have not brought that. If it were necessary to put it on record I can get them taken out and supply the Commission with them.*

404. I do not think it would be necessary to take you over the same ground which has been traversed by Mr. Patterson. You have stated that you have heard his evidence, and that, generally speaking, you concur in it, and you have given us the financial information which he left for you to give; but we shall be very glad if you will give us your views generally upon the question of strikes and lock-outs, and the best mode of preventing them, and so on?—I should think that Mr. Patterson stated the opinion that I would entirely concur in, that the best mode of preventing strikes is conciliation boards and sliding scales. I am a firm believer in the effect of sliding scales. Certainly I hold in reservation my opinion that there may be slight amendments.

Sir *William Lewis.*

405. You gave us some of the strikes; have you had many lock-outs during the last 10 years in your district?—I should consider a strike like South Medomsley a lock-out. Perhaps it would rest on the definition between a strike and a lock-out.

406. What were the circumstances?—It was where the men claimed to be paid a proper wage; the manager claimed to reduce the wages below the acknowledged standard.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

407. Which strike is that?—South Medomsley and Woodlands.

* Money paid for breakage of machinery and stoppages of collieries through accidents in Durham:—

	£	*s.*	*d.*
1881	2,323	7	0
1882	1,896	18	3
1883	2,122	3	9
1884	3,669	13	7
1885	3,558	10	6
1886	5,958	3	7
1887	1,974	4	7
1888	1,375	16	4
1889	2,316	18	3
1890	2,043	11	2
	£27,239	7	0

Sir *William Lewis.*

408. Was that initiated by the owners or by the men?—It was initiated by the owners to go back to its beginning. If they had not refused to pay the proper wage the men would not have given their notice in.

409. But at the particular time was it an attempt on the part of the owner to reduce their average wage below the county average?—It was a refusal on his part to pay them the county average.

410. He being a non-associated owner?—Yes. But you might allow me to add that ever since the associations were formed it has been understood that the non-associated collierise follow the arrangements that are made between the two associations, and that with a very rare exception has been accepted.

411. The strikes that you have mentioned have all been of long duration; is it possible that if the men had not been supported as they were financially by your association that those strikes would have come to an end very much earlier, and the men been employed at other collieries?—If you will allow me to put it as plainly and bluntly as I can; starvation is a very powerful weapon, if men have nothing to support them of course they are bound to accept the terms.

412. Would there have been any difficulty in obtaining employment at other collieries?—I should think not a few of them.

413. Therefore it was not enforced idleness?—Perhaps not, but if you would allow me to qualify it, it is best to have it right. At the time that some of those strikes took place it might have been difficult for some of the men to have found employment, because some of them were elderly men who would have been left out and stronger and younger men would have been employed; but I am now speaking as to the general run of men; I believe they would have found employment, in fact, I am sure of it.

414. So that if they had not been supported as they were by your association they would have obtained work at other collieries?—I have no doubt about that, with those exceptions that I have mentioned of the elderly men.

415. Is the amount that you gave us as having been paid, perhaps I did not correctly catch your answer when I came into the room, 47,932*l.* over the 10 years?—Over the 10 years.

416. Is that confined entirely to strike payments?—Will you allow me to look at the figures again, please. The 47,932*l.* 9*s.* is the total sum. I have taken them out of our books as accurately, at least the society's clerks did, as we possibly could get them out.

417. I do not think you gave us what you paid out of the 6*d.* towards those who may have suffered from accident over the same period?—No, I have not. I mentioned to the Chairman that I have not got those out, but if the Commission would like to have a record, I will see that they are taken out in the same form, and handed in to the Chairman.

418. Then about the 7,300*l.* I understood that was paid towards union men that owners declined

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

to engage?—I qualified that. That would be unfair to the owners, and I am sure that neither Mr. Patterson nor myself has any desire, or would like it to be understood that we say anything that may be unfair to the owners. I say that this was not exactly for men that they refused to employ as a consequence of their being active men, that is, men engaged in Union matters.

419. Are they men who were unable to obtain employment at any of the associated collieries?—No, after a certain time, of course, seeking work. That depends upon the demand for men. That must be understood. In a time when men are scarce then, of course, they find work readily, but in times of depression a man might be longer on our funds simply because he was not required.

420. These were men that you were satisfied had exerted themselves by inquiry and otherwise to obtain employment, and failing employment you considered were entitled to support from your association?—No, I would rather put a prior claim than that, they failed to find employment as a consequence of their condition. These men are placed upon our funds for three classes.

421. Yes, we know; the rules are put in?—I will, however, mention from memory the three classes. I only want this to be understood, because if I make a general remark some may think we are charging the owners with sacrificing the men in this movement. I do not want it to be understood that when I speak of sacrificed men, I mean only men who take an active part in their organisation. We have that class of men who are discharged for taking an active part in their organisation, and those we call purely sacrificed men. If a man be discharged for losing work, and we ascertain that he has worked on an average 10 days per fortnight, we then consider that he is entitled to payment from our fund, because we think he is discharged wrongly. For losing work by not going to the mine a certain number of times in the fortnight. Suppose a pit works 12 days a fortnight, and a man should lose work more than two days per fortnight, then he would not come up to the 10 day rule. But if he came up to the 10 day rule then we should think him entitled to support at 15*s.* a week from our funds. We have another class, and that is where a man is discharged because he cannot make the county average. When he is a weakly man the manager might think they had a right to get the strong men, and would discharge a weakly man who could not make the 5*s.* 11*d.*, or whatever the county average might be at the time. We consider that man if he is discharged for that cause should be paid the sacrifice allowance. The payment of these three classes are included in the money that I have read out.

422. Would there be any advantage to such men who may be weaker than the average of the hewers, if they were allowed to work longer hours than the hewers generally?—Whatever

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

advantage there might be to such a man we think there would be a general loss to the mining community of the county. We think it is best to have a uniformity. The county average represents a mean between the strong and the weak; it does not say that all men get 5*s.* 11*d.*, some men get more and some less, but if all the weaklings are cut off then it would not be an average, it would be a maximum.

423. Then with regard to the 184,000*l.* which you paid in 10 years for the sick, was that contribution partly by the colliery owners and partly by the miners?—Not any by the colliery owners, it is purely and simply a benefit society, on the same lines and guided by the same rules and conditions as any Foresters, Odd Fellows, Druids, or any other society of a similar nature.

424. Do the colliery owners subscribe to any of the sick funds or accident funds of the workmen?—They subscribe to the permanent relief fund, but as has been said this morning, I think it would be better if the secretary of that fund, Mr. Steele, was called in, if you require the figures. If you will allow me to anticipate I could give you the per-centage from those figures. I could give you the colliery owners' per-centages because I take them from an authentic record. Taking the Northumberland and Durham Miners' Permanent Relief Fund, which covers Northumberland and Durham the Cleveland district of Yorkshire and Cumberland, and taking the year 1889 the owners' contributions amount to 4,583*l.*, and the per-centage to the gross revenue was 5.8.

425. With reference to the Vane's Hartley strike which you mentioned, was that caused by the owners declining to carry out the award?—Yes.

426. What was the subject of the dispute?—I was the arbitrator in the case, and the cause was fixing a broken price, what we call technically a broken price. It was considered to be fixed too high, and was refused; it was a very small matter, but it was refused, and the men were brought out on strike.

427. Although the owners had agreed to abide by your decision?—Yes.

Mr. *Abraham.*

428. Referring to those cessations of labour which you refer to under the name of strikes and which lasted for three or four years, are we to understand that what we call a strike itself lasted for three or four years or that a remnant of the body of men were at that time in enforced idleness?—The strike itself, so far as we could sustain it, in two or three of those cases that I have read out lasted two years, but in that time the manager imported into the mine what we call blacklegs. The pit was working, but we had our men there and paying them every fortnight.

429. In that case the body of men were not lying idle, but a portion of the men were?—Not the entire number that we brought out on strike at first, they were not all lying idle.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

430. Could you point to a number of these that you have mentioned where the cause of dispute ceased but where some of the men that took part in the dispute were in enforced idleness?—Where we considered the cause of the dispute had ceased. We did not think it had ceased so long as we kept the men there; the fact of keeping the men on the colliery implied that we thought there was sufficient cause to strike.

431. But had you amongst this number cases of that kind?—Yes, we had.

432. You have been speaking about sacrificed men?—Yes, at Ushaw Moor and all these small collieries that I have read out.

433. How many of such cases were there; will you kindly tell us?—There were four cases in which after we had virtually, or rather not virtually but really, given up the strike we had men upon our books and paid them until they got work.

434. For how long?—I could not say; we had some of them a year, I should say, or more; in fact, if I may be allowed to speak strictly, we have one old man yet, who has never got work at a colliery. He came out on strike in 1882, and he is on yet, but he is not paid by us, you understand; he is too old to get work.

435. What I should like to understand is the real meaning of sacrificed men?—That is a different thing altogether. If the Commission would allow me, I will read the rule that guides us in that.

436. If you please?—"Any member of this "association losing his employment by taking "any part in the advocacy of his rights or the "rights of his fellow men shall be dealt with as "follows." I need not read what we do, but if he loses his employment for taking any part in the advocacy of his rights or the rights of his fellow men, if he is what we consider an active man in the Union, he is a sacrificed man who is discharged, and while I have qualified my reference to such men, because I am not in any way desirous to leave the smallest unnecessary censure upon the employers, I want to say we have had men, and a number of men, of that kind.

437. That is exactly what we want to know. So that you have a number of men after the dispute has been really settled or the cause of it given up who have failed to obtain employment because of the part they took in it?—You see we judge many times by inference and appearance, and we may not judge rightly.

438. In your opinion?—In our opinion that was the case, but we had no positive proof. The men could not find work, and there they were.

439. Have you many cases within your knowledge of the kind that Mr. Patterson mentioned, of men who after being discharged at one colliery have found employment at another, and then, as soon as it became known that they were employed there, were discharged again?—I could not rightly say, but I do know similar cases. But Mr Patterson might allow me to say, and I think he would agree in what I am going to say now, and I think to make the case complete it ought to be stated, that the man he referred to, fearing that he would be obnoxious, got work at the first colliery under an assumed name, and he got work at the

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

last colliery under an assumed name because he was desirous of getting work. I have known men who were sacrificed, what we consider purely sacrificed men, who have got work at collieries, who when they were known to be there have been refused and have been turned off. I have known men, but those are very isolated cases, where, when they have got on and the managers got to know that they were such men, have been told not to come; but I must say that, looking to the number of collieries that we have and the number of men that we have in the organisation, these cases are few and far between, but still they do exist, and I think we shall be very glad when that state of things is entirely abolished.

440. There is a far lesser number now than there were some years ago?—Without having any record I should think that is correct.

441. Could you tell us, in reference to these strikes that you have mentioned, in how many of them notices to terminate the contracts were given by the employers, and in how many of them notices to terminate were given by the workmen?—All I have mentioned were given from our side, if I mistake not. I think we gave in our notices in all the collieries that I have mentioned, except in the case of Seaham, and it must be understood that that arose out of an explosion, we had an explosion there, you will remember, and the men were afraid to work until certain arrangements were made.

442. In that sense, of course, they were really strikes on the part of the men?—If you define a strike to be men giving in notices, yes, they were strikes on the part of the men.

443. Arising out of a question asked by Sir William Lewis, is it possible under present arrangements for old men or weak men to remain in the works longer than ordinary men if they so choose?—No.

444. In your opinion is uniformity of hours necessary for the producing of coal according to the rate it is produced at the present day?—I do not know that in the shortening of the hours we had any thought about the production.

445. I put it for developing the mining industry, then, or the working of the collieries rapidly?—No, we had more regard to the length of time that we thought a man should work than to any other condition.

446. In the working of the collieries at the present day is uniformity of hours a necessity?—Do you speak as comparing one district with another, or one part of a colliery with another?

447. I speak of a colliery, any given colliery?—I think it is necessary.

448. So that if any change were made it should be a change for all, and not a change for a number of them?—I think that.

449. With all due respect will you kindly clear up as to what is meant about the number of pounds of dirt placed in a tub which justifies according to some arrangement the deducting of all the amount from the men's wages?—The arrangements I might say are local and differ in their character. As Mr. Patterson said they range between 14 lbs. and 56 lbs., but it is not right to say that the 14 lbs. loses the value of the tub; it is a graduated fine, 14 lbs. in an 8 cwt. or 9 cwt. tub might take 2*d*. Then the grade would be, say, the next 14 lbs. or 7 lbs. might take another penny, and so we go on until we get the value of the tub of coals, and beyond that, with rare exceptions (we have some), there is no fine imposed. I might be allowed to add this because I think it would throw light upon the point. While these fines may be an individual grievance they are not a general grievance because our county average is a nett average less the amount of fine laid out. Suppose now that our county average is 5*s*. 11*d*. a day at the present time, and suppose men are going for an advance with an average of 5*s*. 6*d*., that would entitle them to the difference between 5*s*. 6*d*. and 5*s*. 11*d*., the 5*s*. 6*d*. actually earned and the 5*s*. 11*d*. they are entitled to would entitle them to an advance of 5*d*. per day. But before we come to consider how much is to be given we should consider how much the fines for "laid out" had been during the fortnight on the colliery; divide that by the number of shifts and deduct that from the gross earnings, and then instead of it being 5*s*. 6*d*. a day it might be 5*s*. 5*d*., and so instead of the men being entitled to 5*d*. a day advance they might be entitled to 6*d*. So that while it is an individual grievance the man would lose often, but it is not a general loss to the colliery of men.

450. Thank you for the explanation, but could you tell us what number of pounds in a given tub would justify taking the whole tub away from the man who hewed?—When you speak about justification and actual practice they may be somewhat different.

451. At any rate according to practice?—I hope the Commission do not want to inquire into the inner recesses of my mind.

452. That would be rather difficult for them to do?—I am now stating the actual practice, and I am showing how it operates. I say it operates between 14 lbs. and 56 lbs. In some cases there will be 56 lbs. on a tub of 8 cwt. before the price of the tub was forfeited.

453. Am I to understand then that 56 lbs. is the maximum?—I should think you might say it is. I do not think you will find many at 56 lbs., but you can say it is the maximum.

454. If 56 lbs. of dirt is found in a tub they, according to some arrangement that justifies taking the whole tub away from the man who hewed it?—Of course; it is justified by actual practice.

455. Whose making?—It is made locally.

456. By whom?—By the men and the managers. Supposing you were starting a new colliery, just let us start with a new colliery—in the arranging of the prices, as Mr. Patterson said, the joint committee, not having the whole of the nature of the colliery before them, would send them to arbitration, and the arbitrators would have to fix a price per ton, and to fix the amount of the "laid out" penalty. These two arbitrators, one chosen by the men, and the other chosen by the employer, would

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

are going on record. As Mr. Patterson has explained, according to the joint committee rules on the sliding scales, the men cannot claim an advance if they are less than 5 per cent. below the county average, and the owners cannot claim a reduction if they are within 5 per cent. above the county average. But suppose that we are 4½ per cent. off the county average by the joint committee rules we should be excluded. But let me suppose now that the laid out over the whole colliery is 1*d.* a shift, which is a very common thing, that in a moment would throw our averages between 5 and 6 per cent. below the county averages, and we should be entitled to 5 per cent. advance, and it so works upwards, and therefore it is not such a hardship as people are apt to think.

Mr. *Burt.*

475. With regard to these deductions for impurities, as to stone and other unsaleable matter, I suppose the reason for the fine is to prevent carelessness and fraud in the way of putting in material which is unsaleable?—I think you have touched the gist of it. It is because, in the coking collieries especially, the trade is so delicate that a very small amount of impurity may spoil the oven or spoil the coking. Therefore, as the question put to me is, it is for a check rather than a fine, it is to check rather than to inflict a punishment upon the men.

476. So that I may put it, if the arrangement itself is mutually agreed upon, the workmen, as a whole, do not consider that it is in itself unfair that a fine may be imposed?—No. I tell you that all the unfairness they do complain of at times is this, that they may think the fine is too big for the amount of impurity, stone, or whatever it may be, and with one or two exceptions which we have had latterly in the county of Durham (and only one or two), men have not complained about the system, but they have complained about its operation, and would like to lessen the fine or increase the quantity and limit the fine to the price of the tub.

477. In other words is it not to the advantage of the workmen as a whole as well as to the employers that the coal should be sent away clean?—I think that it is to their advantage, and it ought to be the aim of every workman as well as of the employer to turn out an article which is saleable and could command the market. It is just as much in the interest of one party as in the interest of the other.

478. With regard to the relief fund which you mentioned, is that fund still in existence in the county of Durham?—No, when we found that the men were being employed as they were in 1889 (covering the time between 1884 and 1889), we then abolished the relief fund, because it was a voluntary subscription which the men put on themselves outside the ordinary subscription. I may say that I was treasurer at the time, and the money used to come into my hands in the bulk and was divisible by the number of men who were off. Whatever money came in was

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

divided by the number of men and they received that as their quota for support.

479. You stated the amounts which have been paid in, I think, about five years from 1884 to 1889 inclusive?—Yes.

480. But you did not give the total. I suppose you could easily give that?—I thought I had read the total out. The total amount for the five years paid to the relief fund is 33,910*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.*

481. That was paid to the men who were discharged on account of the stoppage of the pits?—Yes.

482. Would it include the breakage of the machinery, if you had any?—The breakage of the machinery would come under the ordinary rules.

483. May we say, therefore, that if that money had not been paid to those men they would probably have had to apply for poor relief or to be supported by the community in other ways?—I think it has been acknowledged by the board of guardians in the county of Durham that the relief fund, which the miners imposed upon themselves, saved the rates very largely. I would like to say that between the years 1875 and 1879 we had a relief fund of the same kind which used to pay about 8*s.* a week to the men.

484. At the time that your members taxed themselves to that amount may we say that they were receiving much lower wages than in ordinary times?—Speaking, of course, within a few pence, covering four of those years, it was at least 16*d.* less than it is now-a-day. That is for coal getters and the other classes of labour in proportion. Our average wage at that time would not exceed 4*s.* 7*d.* per day; it now is 5*s.* 11*d.*

485. Was there in addition to the low wage irregularity of employment?—Yes; in a large number of cases. Collieries were working five or six days, and a number of the men had to be exempt, because we exempt them by rule from paying their contributions when the collieries work five days or less.

486. That is per fortnight?—Per fortnight. In these periods a number of collieries were exempt.

487. You mentioned the Silksworth Colliery and the last strike which took place there, but you did not enter into any detail with regard to that strike. That strike, as you are aware, attracted a good deal of attention owing to the evictions and so on?—Yes.

488. Would you object to state the cause of the dispute?—I would like to put on record our view of it. If the owners come forth and give their evidence then the Commission must decide between us. What I would state would be the workmen's view of the case.

489. And may I say your own?—And my own, because I think what I am stating here is what I have told elsewhere. Some five or six years ago, there was a strike and a number of the deputies left the miners' organisation, or were induced to leave the miners' organisation, to use the softest

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

give the price, the amount for "laid out," and any other payment that might be required to work the seam.

457. Then that would become one of the conditions of employment at that colliery?—So long as it existed, but it is so oft-times altered. If the seam varies, and you and I well know that there are seams in which there is no stone, and where it would be impossible to get 14 lbs. of dirt in a tub; but suppose that there should be stone in the coal or on the top which came down amongst the coal, then that would necessitate a re-arrangement.

458. That arrangement would be one of the conditions of employment at that colliery?—That is so; if a man were to get work at that colliery one of the conditions imposed would be that his tub would be forfeited for 56 lbs. of dirt if that were fixed.

459. Would that be considered in conformity with the Mines Act?—I must leave that to legislators to decide.

460. Let me put it in this way then, would you consider that as substituting the arrangement provided for in the Mines Act?—I think the Mines Act leaves it to the power of settlement between the two parties affected; is that not so?

461. Then there is no mode of arrangement possible, do you say?—If I understand the Mines Act, relying upon a memory which is not very tenacious, I believe that parties have power to arrange.

462. Yes, they have power to arrange?—And we arrange with that understanding.

463. Then that is carrying out, in your opinion, the provisions of the Mines Act for that purpose?—I should think so so long as the parties are agreeable.

Mr. *Trow.*

464. You made a reference to this sacrificed member, as you call him, to whom Mr. Patterson referred this morning; was the man discharged from the second and third pits for securing employment under an assumed name or because he was the individual himself?—Again I would like to put it on record that I have a great repugnance to men being discharged for taking an active part in the organisation. I do not think they should be, but having put that by way of preface, I want to say that if the man were here he would admit that he was discharged at the third colliery because he was there under an assumed name. I spoke to him not later than last Saturday.

465. Would the same remark apply to the third pit?—In the second pit he went to he could not work, it was too low, and he left it himself. The second pit was in Northumberland, and it was too low. He was a tall man, and had been used to work in a thick seam, and this was a very thin seam, in which he could not work.

466 We were under the impression, at any rate I was under the impression, this morning from what Mr. Patterson said that the man had been stopped at both pits because of some action taken on the part of the employer at the first pit?—He was Thomas Hedley, and because his name was Thomas Hedley, whether they got to know what he had done I could not say, but ostensibly they discharged him because he got work under an assumed name. Really it might be, as Mr. Patterson said, because he was Thomas Hedley.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

467. Is it not rather hard, and is it not laying it on pretty strong, and running very near to the wind, if because the man is discharged and obnoxious to one employer you prevent him getting employment at another place?—If you ask my candid opinion I say it is a thing that ought not to be.

468. We often talk about Conspiracy Acts, do you think that that does not come within the meaning of the Act; if your men were attempting to prevent a man being employed because he was a non-society man, you would have the press down upon you, and they would be trying whether they could not be doing something to you; do you not think this would come under the Act?—I tell you again I express my sentiments if it be wrong for men to object to a man working it is equally wrong for the owners to object to a man because he has been an active man in the union. That is what I say.

469. They ought to set the example by not doing it?—I quite agree that they should set us an example.

470. I do not know how much is in your tubs?—They vary from 6 cwt. up to 10 cwt. and 11 cwt., and I may say we have some at 12 cwt.

471. Then if there were 56 lbs. of dirt in the tub the man would lose the other 11½ cwt.?—He would lose the value of the tub.

472. He would lose 11½ cwt. for it?—That is so, he would lose it, but always bear in mind that in the general wage arrangement it is not considered such a hardship amongst practical men in Durham as men who are not conversant with it might think.

473. I do not say that it is, because I understand from your statement that it is a matter which is arranged mutually between the employers and the workmen, and that it is not a custom which is forced upon the men without consultation or wthout their consent. But recognising that fact it is still hard upon the man, is it not?—I would put it that there is another beneficial point which you have omitted, not only is it palatable because it is a mutual arrangement, but because it is a deduction from our gross wage. If this Commission knew, as I know, the workings of the joint committee they would be aware that it many times brings to us a 5 per cent. advance, and saves us from a 5 per cent. deduction which we should otherwise suffer.

474. Then it is an injury to the individual, but it is for the good of the many?—That is it. If you will just allow me I will explain it. I think it is quite necessary, because these things

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

497. Is there any strong feeling among your members in favour of the amendment of the Act?—Yes, there is a very strong feeling.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

498. Following up the last question could you tell me in what way they desire that the Act should be amended?—They desire that there should not be an opportunity to force men to contract out of the Act, as has been done in certain districts, and they are against any insurance arising out of the Employers' Liability Bill.

499. Would they not allow employers to insure against liability under the Act?—Employers may insure themselves out of the Act if they desire it, but not to contract the men out of its provisions.

500. That feeling does not arise from anything which has occurred in your own district, does it?—No.

501. It is rather on general grounds that you have come to that conclusion?—On general grounds. There has been no attempt, I may say no serious attempt, to force it upon us. I believe that in Lancashire and one or two other places—perhaps Lancashire I had better speak of—there were conditions of employment forced on the men, one of the conditions being contraction out of the Act. But the effort on the part of our owners never went that far; it would have been a mutual arrangement if it had been made at all.

502. You have given us the amount which was paid on behalf of the sacrificed members, and that fund, I understand, has been distributed between three classes?—Yes.

503. Those who are in the strictest sense of the term sacrificed men, and, in addition to those two other classes, one consisting of the men who are dismissed for not working the full number of days?—Yes.

504. Would you explain with a little more detail?—I could not give you the amount of money. Why I stated that was this: I divide them into three classes for the purpose of making it clear to the Commission, so that nothing partaking of an evil character might attach to the employers that was unfair.

505. Quite so, I understand this?—You will allow me to say, in a *sotto voce*, they are bad enough as they are, and I do not want to make them any worse. What I want to say is this: It was only for the enlightenment of the Commission, if you will allow me to put it in that way, that I divided them into these classes, but our men think these are all sacrificed, that must be understood, or they would not keep them.

506. I rather want to know what leads the men to consider they are sacrificed; how many days of a week is it necessary for them to work?—Five days per week. If a man prove that for the last three fortnights he has worked five days a week, that is 10 days a fortnight, he is entitled to the sacrificed allowance.

Mr. *Burt.*

507. That is in case he is dismissed for loss of time?—Yes.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

508. I was just going to ask you that; would it be a common thing to dismiss a man because he had only worked five days a week instead of six?—There are numbers of men discharged, for losing work, and we have found out, when we have gone into it, that they had worked five days a week.

509. Would that not be a proper subject to bring before the joint committee?—No, the joint committee does not recognise that as being within its jurisdiction.

510. Does it recognise no question in relation to discharged men?—The owners say it is a county question, and it ought to rest between the employers and the workmen, but we would like to bring it before the joint committee if we could.

511. Similarly with regard to men discharged because they were not strong enough to make the weekly county average, is not their case another subject that you would like to come under the cognizance of the joint committee?—Yes, and more particularly than the other, for this reason. Our arrangements with the employers are based on a standard average wage, and the average is the mean between the strong and the weak; therefore we think that if they get the strength of the strong men to make up the average (who might make their 8*s.* a day when the average is 5*s.* 11*d.*), a weak man ought not to be discharged, otherwise it cannot be a fair average between the strong and the weak.

512. Do the employers resist the inclusion of those two points among the subjects dealt with by the joint committee?—They resist them on the general ground that the discharge of men is a peculiar privilege of their own.

513. Have you a minimum wage in your district?—No, we have no minimum wage except for a certain class of labourers, who are paid by the day.

514. Has there been any desire to fix a minimum wage?—Mr. Patteson was asked this morning about the amendment between the first and the second sliding scale. That dealt with the minimum wage. In the first sliding scale, no matter how low the prices of coal were at the pit mouth, the wage could not be reduced below 4*s.* 8*d.* a day for coal getters, but the owners felt that that acted unfairly and hardly, and it was taken out in the second scale.

515. And has no attempt been made to put that back into the sliding scales which have been adopted since?—No, I may say that the men of Durham felt after they saw that scale, that if they had the privilege of following the prices up, they should follow the prices down.

516. Now with regard to the strikes. You have given us a list of strikes, which I take it are the principal strikes throughout the years under review?—Those were the strikes which cost us large sums of money, and I have a note of some more here which have happened where the men were off for just a short time. I have given you those which covered the long periods and cost money.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

517. I was rather directing my attention to this that all these strikes were local strikes?—Yes.

518. And there has been no general strike throughout the district?—There has been no general strike since 1879.

519. Have you found any difficulty in connection with these strikes in binding by means of decisions of the joint committee either the employers on the one side, or the men on the other, where either the employers were not associated with the Employers' Association or the men were non-unionists?—The non-unionists are so few at our collieries that their action cannot affect us materially.

520. Are the non-associated employers numerous?—No, the few that are are very small collieries.

521. So that practically it comes to this: that whatever the joint committee decide upon all the employers are forced to fall in with?—They do fall in with it because there are very few of them and a small number of collieries, particularly in the west part of the county.

522. I would like to ask one further question with regard to the labour fund. Out of the labour fund you pay the money required to maintain the sacrificed men?—Yes, 15*s.* a week.

523. And you pay the money required to support strikers?—I will read you the rule in reference to sacrificed members. The sacrificed men are paid 15*s.* per week, and, if married, for each boy under 14, and each girl under 14, 1*s.* per week if not working. Half members are paid 6*s.* 6*d.* per week, that is, if a boy is half member of the fund.

524. Then that fund would provide for sacrificed men and also for the case of strikes and of accidents?—Yes.

525. The employers do not contribute to that fund at all, do they?—No, not at all.

526. Naturally they do not?—They do not contribute to any fund connected with our association.

527. But they pay certain sums to men who happen to suffer from accidents, do they not?—As Mr. Patterson mentioned, we call it smart money. We have no right to complain, I think it is paid loyally. But there must be cases where there is a suspicion that a man has not been injured. In all clear cases there is 5*s.* a week paid for men, and 2*s.* 6*d.* a week paid for what we call boys; that is, young boys.

528. So that those who are suffering from accidents receive money out of this labour fund, and in addition to that they receive a certain sum weekly from the employers?—You are using the word "accident" in a twofold sense. The accident is where the machine at the colliery breaks, or the pit is laid idle through any emergency; that is what we call an accident, which lays the colliery off, and we pay for that; but the accident which injures a man comes under the sick rules.

529. For which you make special provision?—Yes.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

530. After the manner of benefit societies generally?—If he pays into it; you know it is optional whether he pays or not.

531. There is, besides, a permanent relief fund to which both employer and employed contribute, is there not?—Yes. You will have the secretary before you. The employers paid, as I have mentioned, in the year 1889, 4,583*l.*, and the contributions to the fund from the members subscriptions that year was 78,454*l.*

532. To what objects is the permanent relief fund devoted?—If a man is injured he gets 5*s.* a week from it for the first 26 weeks, then if he is injured, what we call permanently, he gets 8*s.* a week so long as he is off work through that injury after the first 26 weeks. If a man is killed his widow gets 5*s.* a week, and each child, up to a certain age, about 14, gets 2*s.* a week. There is what we call the superannuation fund, which is a fund for the old men over 60; they get 4*s.* a week out of it.

533. Out of the permanent relief fund?—Yes.

534. So that anybody suffering from an accident gets 5*s.* a week from the employers and 5*s.* from the permanent relief fund for 26 weeks?—Yes, that is supposing he paid into the permanent relief fund.

535. Precisely, supposing he were a subscriber?—Yes.

Mr. *Tait.*

536. But that is optional, I suppose?—It is optional. I may say that the money is kept off at all the collieries by the employers who keep it off the men's wages, by arrangement with the men, be it understood, and through that process we have nearly every man and boy in the county belonging to the fund. To give you an idea of the extent of membership, which, of course, is simply anticipating Mr. Steele's evidence, I might say that there are about 100,000 members of the fund.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

537. I will only ask you one other question. Mr. Patterson complained that the joint committee was overburdened with work, and he thought, if I understood him rightly, that that had been the cause of an additional number of disputes, or at least of disputes which were not settled without strikes?—That is easily understood. If the men at a colliery think that they have a grievance which bears upon them heavily, they send it to the joint committee, and ofttimes it is four or five months before it is settled. That irritates the men, and I believe with Mr. Patterson that if by some means the work of the joint committee could be lightened, and these cases got to more expeditiously, that a lot of the irritation would be allayed.

538. I agree with you that it is perfectly natural, but I want to ask whether you have any suggestion to make with a view of lightening the work of the joint committee?—I do not know that I have any suggestion to make offhand. We might make it to the employers. Our suggestion would be that there should be a larger

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

are going on record. As Mr. Patterson has explained, according to the joint committee rules on the sliding scales, the men cannot claim an advance if they are less than 5 per cent. below the county average, and the owners cannot claim a reduction if they are within 5 per cent. above the county average. But suppose that we are 4½ per cent. off the county average by the joint committee rules we should be excluded. But let me suppose now that the laid out over the whole colliery is 1*d.* a shift, which is a very common thing, that in a moment would throw our averages between 5 and 6 per cent. below the county averages, and we should be entitled to 5 per cent. advance, and it so works upwards, and therefore it is not such a hardship as people are apt to think.

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476. So that I may put it, if the arrangement itself is mutually agreed upon, the workmen, as a whole, do not consider that it is in itself unfair that a fine may be imposed?—No. I tell you that all the unfairness they do complain of at times is this, that they may think the fine is too big for the amount of impurity, stone, or whatever it may be, and with one or two exceptions which we have had latterly in the county of Durham (and only one or two), men have not complained about the system, but they have complained about its operation, and would like to lessen the fine or increase the quantity and limit the fine to the price of the tub.

477. In other words is it not to the advantage of the workmen as a whole as well as to the employers that the coal should be sent away clean?—I think that it is to their advantage, and it ought to be the aim of every workman as well as of the employer to turn out an article which is saleable and could command the market. It is just as much in the interest of one party as in the interest of the other.

478. With regard to the relief fund which you mentioned, is that fund still in existence in the county of Durham?—No, when we found that the men were being employed as they were in 1889 (covering the time between 1884 and 1889), we then abolished the relief fund, because it was a voluntary subscription which the men put on themselves outside the ordinary subscription. I may say that I was treasurer at the time, and the money used to come into my hands in the bulk and was divisible by the number of men who were off. Whatever money came in was divided by the number of men and they received that as their quota for support.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

479. You stated the amounts which have been paid in, I think, about five years from 1884 to 1889 inclusive?—Yes.

480. But you did not give the total. I suppose you could easily give that?—I thought I had read the total out. The total amount for the five years paid to the relief fund is 33,910*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.*

481. That was paid to the men who were discharged on account of the stoppage of the pits?—Yes.

482. Would it include the breakage of the machinery, if you had any?—The breakage of the machinery would come under the ordinary rules.

483. May we say, therefore, that if that money had not been paid to those men they would probably have had to apply for poor relief or to be supported by the community in other ways?—I think it has been acknowledged by the board of guardians in the county of Durham that the relief fund, which the miners imposed upon themselves, saved the rates very largely. I would like to say that between the years 1875 and 1879 we had a relief fund of the same kind which used to pay about 8*s.* a week to the men.

484. At the time that your members taxed themselves to that amount may we say that they were receiving much lower wages than in ordinary times?—Speaking, of course, within a few pence, covering four of those years, it was at least 16*d.* less than it is now-a-day. That is for coal getters and the other classes of labour in proportion. Our average wage at that time would not exceed 4*s.* 7*d.* per day: it now is 5*s.* 11*d.*

485. Was there in addition to the low wage irregularity of employment?—Yes: in a large number of cases. Collieries were working five or six days, and a number of the men had to be exempt, because we exempt them by rule from paying their contributions when the collieries work five days or less.

486. That is per fortnight.—Per fortnight. In these periods a number of collieries were exempt.

487. You mentioned the Silksworth Colliery and the last strike which took place there, but you did not enter into any detail with regard to that strike. That strike, as you are aware, attracted a good deal of attention owing to the evictions and so on?—Yes.

488. Would you object to state the cause of the dispute?—I would like to put on record our view of it. If the owners come forth and give their evidence then the Commission must decide between us. What I would state would be the workmen's view of the case.

489. And may I say your own?—And my own, because I think what I am stating here is what I have told elsewhere. Some five or six years ago, there was a strike and a number of the deputies left the miners' organisation, or were induced to leave the miners' organisation, to use the softest

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

term I can, and our late Secretary, Mr. Crawford, and our President, met the manager of the colliery and agreed that the deputies about whom the agitation arose should have a free hand, neither side to use any influence whatever, and that it should be left to their own option whether they would be in the miners' organisation or whether they would be in the deputies' organisation, or whether they would be in neither. That went on for some time, and then the manager began in an underhand way first, but then openly, to use certain kinds of influence upon the men. One was to give the deputies who were outside the miners' organisation extra days per fortnight. Just suppose the pit was off, he would send the deputies who were outside our organisation to work; he would give them an extra day or he would give them certain privileges. There was an accident fund in connexion with the colliery under which the employer, the Marquis of Londonderry, paid 25 per cent.; for every 1*s.* the men paid he paid 3*d.* The manager, being president of this accident fund, or at least the meeting over which he presided, got a resolution passed that no man should share the benefits of this fund who was in the miners' organisation. That in a moment excluded all the men who were with us.

Mr. *Dale.*

490. Do you mean "no man" or "no deputy"?—No deputy I meant, because there were nothing else but deputies in it. That, of course, roused the ire of the men, and the men got a resolution passed at our council meeting to the effect that those who were outside the miners' organisation should be compelled to join. They said they did it, which I think is a very fair statement, to save the other men who were still with them. A number of deputies were remaining in the miners' organisation, and were wishful to remain, but they felt that they were in a very precarious situation and they got this resolution passed. They said, now if we do not do something all the men will be forced out. If you will abide by the arrangement made by Mr. Crawford, we are quite willing to abide by it. Then the strike commenced, and that was what led to the strike. The strike was really to compel the deputies who had been induced, to put it in the mildest form, to leave our organisation to re-enter again.

Mr. *Burt.*

491. How long did the strike last and how much did it cost?—I could not tell you, I have not the figures here. We have only taken the figures up to 1890, but I know it lasted some considerable time. It lasted till a number of the men were turned out of their houses and homes.

492. You have taken a great interest in the Employers' Liability Act, I believe?—Along with yourself I have done some little work in connexion with it.

493. Has it been of any advantage to the miners of Durham?—I may say that our agitation for the Employers' Liability Bill was never conducted with a view to receiving money. It was conducted with a desire to have all the safety that we could for our occupation, but it has been a very great pecuniary benefit to our men, although we have never had a case in the law courts yet; we have settled all our cases outside by compromise and arrangement. The nearest we have been, I think, was when our friend, Mr. Jones, and we were within the lobbies of the law courts in Durham, but we compromised before we got into the hands of the lawyers really. That is the nearest we have been. I may say that no later than last week, I think it was last week, a case has been settled at Usworth, arising out of a boiler explosion, where three men and a boy were killed and one injured. I believe that in the case of the three men who were killed their relatives have got 200*l.* apiece; that the father of the boy who was killed has got 50*l.*, and that the man who was injured has got 80*l.* We have had a number of settlements where widows have got 150*l.*, and have got very large privileges, such as being allowed to remain in their houses, and to get their coal and their houses free, and some other little benefits.

494. So that it has been of great precuniary benefit although you have not gone into litigation?—Yes, although we have not gone into litigation. We have tried to settle all the cases outside the law courts.

495. Then with regard to the safety, which is the main reason why you and others have advocated it, has it had any advantage in that way?—I think that it has. I am now speaking from statistics, one's inference from them may be wrong, but there has been running concurrently with the Employers' Liability Bill and other arrangements a decrease in the per-centage of lives lost per thousand of men employed. That leads one to infer that the Employers' Liability Bill has had something to do with the safety of our lives underground.

496. Has there been any attempt in Durham, as there has been in some other mining districts, to compel the workmen to contract out of the Act?—I could not use the word "compel," but I could use the word "effort." When the Employers' Liability Bill was passed in 1880—I think it was—there was a desire on the part of our employers to make an arrangement, and there was a desire, I may say, on the part of some of the leaders in the permanent relief fund and others in the North to fall in with that view. Others of us did not coincide with it, and it was opposed. There was no serious intention, and there was no desire to make it a condition of labour; it was intended, I believe, on the part of the owners, to be a mutual agreement, and the owners would have increased their subscriptions to the permanent relief fund the Committee of which I was a member at that time, if we could have agreed to it. But we felt that he had all along been opposed to the contraction out of the Employers' Liability Bill and therefore we opposed the arrangement.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

attempt to settle at the collieries in trivial cases, on both sides, mind, I do not charge one side more than the other.

Sir *W. T. Lewis.*

539. I wish to ask you whether you concur in the answer given by Mr. Patterson with reference to the violation of the Mines Regulation Act in the colleries in Durham?—The Commission may feel that I sympathised perhaps intrusively with Mr. Patterson, but I should like to say that he is really very poorly, and I am afraid that that answer was taken in too complete and absolute a sense. I think it was taken rather too absolutely, because the violations of the Mines Act in the county of Durham are not anything that we can complain of. I think his answer, on account of his weak state, was taken rather too absolutely.

Mr. *Abraham.*

540. All the contributions made by employers to the permanent relief fund in Durham are not made on the condition that the men contract themselves out of the Act, are they?—No, they are not made under that condition.

Sir *John Gorst.*

541. I presume it is quite optional for members of your Union to subscribe to the sick fund or not as they like?—Yes.

542. Do the greater part of them subscribe to the sick fund?—A very large number of them do now.

543. That is quite a separate subscription from the ordinary Union subscription, is it not?—Yes.

544. Are many of the members of your Union members of such benefit societies as the Oddfellows?—Yes.

545. Those naturally would not subscribe to your sick fund?—No, I think we only get those who are not members of any other societies.

546. When a man is hurt in an accident we understand he receives a weekly contribution of 5*s.* from the employer?—Yes.

547. Does he also receive 5*s.* from the permanent relief fund?—Yes.

548. What does he get from your sick fund if he is a member of it?—He will get 10*s.* a week.

549. In addition to the sums he receives from these other sources?—Yes.

550. How long would your sick fund continue to pay him anything; for how many weeks?—He gets 10*s.* a week for the first 26 weeks, and 5*s.* a week for the second 26 weeks, and 4*s.* a week so long as he is unable to resume work.

551. Have you, besides the sick fund, any accident fund.—I am using the term in the sense of a fund which pays something to a man who is the victim of an accident?—No.

552. Suppose a man were killed, have you any fund which would pay anything to his widow or to his family?—Those arrangements are local, but there are numbers of them in the county,

Sir *John Gorst*—continued.

and the understanding is that if a man is killed all the men upon the colliery will pay 1*s.* each, and the boys 6*d.*

553. That is a subscription made *ad hoc* for the particular case?—Yes.

554. Do you find in the accidents which occur in the collieries any men debarred from compensation from the employer by reason of the doctrine of common employment?—No, not with us.

555. Not with you?—No, we have never had that in any way put before us.

556. And you have never been into court?—Never.

557. And therefore you have had no lawyers' fees to pay?—No.

558. Then except as regards the power to contract out of the Act, which is rather a sentimental than a practical grievance, does the Employers' Liability Act work well in the colliery districts?—It works well as far as we are concerned.

Mr. *Tait.*

559. Regarding the Employers' Liability Act, and your reply to a question which was put with reference to the insurance clauses, you, of course, give the employers the same right to insure themselves out of any liability under the Act that the members of your society claim to exercise for their own protection?—We never inquire as to whom he gets to bear his responsibilities.

560. The only objection you have to the insurance clauses is to their being used jointly between employer and workmen to insure out of the provisions of the Act?—Yes.

561. While you have not, in the county of Durham, had occasion to complain, as miners, of the doctrine of common employment, yet in principle, and I ask you personally, have you any objection to the doctrine of common employment being incorporated in any Employers' Liability Act?—I have an objection as far as I am concerned.

562. You have seen the Bills, I believe, the Bill of the Government and also the Bills which have been promoted by Mr. Burt and others, and by the parliamentary committee of the Trades Union Congress?—Yes.

563. May I ask you to express an opinion as to which of these Bills you think would be most desirable in the interests of the workmen?—I really could not say that I remember them closely enough to give an opinion. If you will kindly ask me upon any point perhaps I may be able to answer you.

564. Might I ask you whether you think that the notice under the existing Act is sufficient?—I think it is too short.

565. Do you think that in any new measure which may be introduced there should be incorporated some provision for a lengthened period for notices of compensation on death or injury?—I think so, for one or two reasons. Taking some of the explosions we have had in the county of Durham in which some of us have been, it was

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

really some months before we could satisfy ourselves as to the causes or whether anybody was chargeable with negligence or carelessness, and in that case we would be shut out.

566. Have you had in the county of Durham any miners, within your recollection, who have been injured while following their employment, and who have ultimately died after the expiry of six weeks?—Yes, we have had men who have died after longer periods than that.

567. Then, under the present Act, in such cases you would be prevented from obtaining compensation?—Yes.

568. Therefore, for reasons of this kind, it is desirable that the notice should be extended?—Yes.

569. You made some reference to the late Silksworth strike, and to the evictions there; I shall not dwell on them, but I should like to ask whether you think that the present law relative to the protection of property is equitable in every degree to workmen and employer during either a strike or a lock-out?—We are under a special arrangement; we take the employment and houses with the understanding that when our employment is terminated we leave the houses.

570. But besides the question of housing, there is the question of picketing, which is a thing you are fairly entitled to do in the interests of the workmen, and which the employers are entitled to do in the interests of themselves; do you think that the clauses relative to picketing during a strike or a lock-out are sufficiently defined in the present Act, and do you think that there should be any alteration in the present law?—I think they bear hardly on the workmen.

571. Are you aware that the judges of the country have differed upon the clauses?—Yes.

572. Therefore, should you say it is necessary for the advantage of all that something more definite and explicit should be enacted?—Yes.

573. I have just one or two questions about accidents in mines to ask. There are a large number of accidents in mines, are there not?—Yes.

574. I have no doubt you have read the returns which have been put forward from year to year. You made a remark to-day to the effect that you thought that, to a very large extent, the operation of the Employers' Liability Act had contributed to diminish these accidents?—I said that, without attributing all the safety to the Employers' Liability Bill, it had been running concurrently with an increasing safety.

575. And therefore it had been beneficial?—Yes.

576. You also made a remark that previous to its introduction there were more accidents?—My authority would be a speech I have lying before me, from which I might be allowed to quote a portion. It is by one of your fellow Commissioners. My friend, Mr. Burt, in a speech made not long ago, I think, gives a statement as to the loss of life in mines. In speaking of

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

1851, he says, "The death ratio in persons employed was 1 in 223. Then an amending Act was passed, and the ratio rose during the next five years ending 1860, to one death for every 258 persons employed. Another amending Act was passed, and during the next 12 years the average was one death for every 312 persons employed. Then a new Mines Regulation Act was passed, mainly through the efforts of the Miners' National Union, in 1872, and during the 15 years from 1872 to 1887, the average mortality had fallen to one death for every 466 persons employed. In other words, as compared with the first period, the safety had been doubled; there was only half the number of deaths in proportion to the number of persons employed. Then the Act of 1887 was passed, and there was a still more satisfactory result. During the three years in which the new Mines Act had been in operation, there had been one death for every 553 persons employed."

577. I take it that, during the periods about which Mr. Burt is there speaking from, there would be a considerable amount of agitation amongst the miners regarding the high death rate from accidents?—Yes, I should think so.

578. And your Association, along with kindred miners' associations in the country, advocated the appointment of practical mining inspectors?—Yes.

579. And you were successful with the Government on that point?—Yes.

580. Since these practical men were appointed there has been a diminution in the accidents, has there not?—Of course there are these figures. I will just lay them alongside your ideas, that is all.

581. Is it your opinion that where any employment is of a dangerous character, similar to employment in mines and quarries, the Government, as in the case of mines and quarries, should appoint inspectors possessed of practical and technical knowledge for the purpose of looking after the interests of such dangerous industries?—I think so.

Lord *Hartington.*

582. I have not heard the whole of your evidence, but do I understand that the effect of what you have told us is that through your society and other similar societies you consider the miners in your district are so perfectly organised as to be able to deal on fairly equal terms with the employers?—Yes, I think in our county we are, and I may say, speaking now relatively to other districts, that we have a perfect understanding between our employers and ourselves. We meet them frequently whenever need requires, beyond the joint committee, which meets on an average once a fortnight.

583. Then that being the case you do not ask for any additional legislation affecting your industry?—No, apart from the Employers' Liability Bill, to which we are referring, and some amendments to the Mines Act.

Mr. *Austin.*

584. I notice that in the year 1890 there was a large sum of 11,000*l.* spent as strike pay?—Yes.

585. And that in 1886, 1887, 1888, and 1889, it averaged about 6,000*l.*?—Yes, of course that will be about the figure you will get.

586. In how many cases have you been successful in those strikes?—Taking the Wearmouth that cost us 6,241*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.* We consider we were successful in that strike, which was for shortening the hours. The men demanded seven hours from bank to bank and their hours were eight hours and above.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

587. When was that strike?—In the year 1890; I could not exactly tell you the month. The arrangement come to was that their hours were shortened.

Mr. *Austin.*

588. Seeing that there was an increased cost to you in the strike period, and that it would be a great loss to the employers, what suggestions would you put forward for the settlement of such disputes outside yourselves when both sides could not agree?—My idea is that all matters of this kind should be referred to arbitration. Here I might say that I entirely concur with Mr. Patterson, that there is a difference between fixing by arbitration the basis of a sliding scale, which lasts for three years, and one of these cases, which, according to our understanding, only lasts three months; but in all these cases—I am speaking my own opinion—I would refer them to arbitration.

589. Is that your own opinion or the opinion generally of your members?—Speaking generally of my members, in some cases they refer to arbitration and in others they refuse. We are a thoroughly democratic society, as democratic as anything can be, and it must be understood that sometimes our members refuse and sometimes they accept. I am now speaking my own opinion when I say that I would refer them all to arbitration.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

590. I am not quite clear as to what the 10,000*l.* was spent on last year?—I gave two or three classes of benefits.

591. I am referring to the expenditure on strikes?—There were two or three strikes; I only gave the big strike. The strikes at Silksworth cost us 5,096*l.* 12*s.* 8*d.*

592. And there were others?—Yes, but I could not tell you now what they cost.

593. I thought that rather a rough comment on the reply you gave to Lord Hartington just now respecting the perfect understanding which exists between yourselves and the employers?—You will understand that I qualified that "perfect understanding." I said, speaking relatively to other districts and trade organisations; I did not say it was perfect; I do not think any human institution is absolutely perfect; but I think, speaking now with regard to trades

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

organisations, that we are about as perfect as anyone.

594. It would seem to me at any rate that there is a considerable advance to be made yet before we can speak of anything approaching amicable relationships, in face of the fact that your county spent close upon 11,000*l.* in disputes last year, and have been engaged in these terrible Silksworth evictions this year?—Well, that is so, but I would like you to understand that I could whisper a matter in your ears. The Commission will forgive me, but I should speak plainly out here about the Silksworth strike. I am an official of the Union, and, while you may have free license to condemn, perhaps I may be reserved in my qualifications.

595. As regards Silksworth, at any rate, we will say nothing more about it, but it certainly seemed to me that there is yet something lacking with regard to the joint committee and the board of arbitration. Mr. Patterson this morning told us that the joint committee sometimes is compelled to allow matters to lie over for a period of six months, and that in consequence dissatisfaction arises, resulting in a strike; is that so?—That, you will understand, is not anything peculiar to the joint committee and the Durham miners. It is simply what might happen in any court in the world, because it is due to overcrowding of cases which cannot be dealt with. I was at the joint committee on Monday, and we had before that joint committee about 50 cases. There were about 10 or 15 of those cases which were not reached, and they will rest over for six weeks before they take their turn. They will come up at the next joint committee meeting.

596. If there were sufficient meetings you would probably be able to avoid these disputes?—I daresay if we could get more meetings that would put it right.

597. In the case of these various disputes which cost upwards of 11,000*l.* last year, were they dealt with in the first instance by the joint committee?—I have not got the whole of the collieries here.

598. Were they referred to arbitration in any case or in all cases?—No, because the men refused the arbitration.

599. In every case?—Yes, I should say so. Take Silksworth. That is one of the big strikes, and there the men would not accept arbitration.

600. How often does your board of arbitration meet?—You must distinguish between a board of arbitration and a joint committee. The joint committee meets once a fortnight on an average, but the days may come on a Friday and a Monday just to suit the county court judge's days of business. He fixes his days for three months ahead, and gives us a list to suit his own days and we have to adjust the meetings accordingly. On an average we meet once a fortnight.

601. I should like your opinion as to whether it would not be advisable to have something in

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

the nature of a state board of arbitration which would step in before there was such a great expenditure incurred?—You would be aware that I favour, say the Board of Trade interfering with the railway hours, but I certainly would object to—at least I would try to avoid—the state interfering, or the Board of Trade interfering, between employers and workmen, until they had utterly failed to settle between themselves. I think boards of conciliation should be formed all over the country wherever they can between employers and workmen.

602. I have exactly that feeling too, but I should like to ask whether it is not considered a failure when such an expenditure as this is incurred?—You want to understand really which side is to blame and how the thing arises. I could not go into every particular case and say, it arose in this way, and the blame lay on that side, but there is the fact that the Silksworth strike took place, arbitration was offered, and the men refused.

603. You have given strike figures for periods of five years or more, 10 years I think, and in every case there has been a considerable sum expended?—Yes.

604. I can hardly expect that we shall so perfect ourselves either on the employers side or on the workers side, that we shall not have these faults with us for the next 10 years or 20 years?—Just so.

605. But it is desirable in your opinion I presume, and certainly in mine, that we should prevent this expenditure and this cessation of work?—I would like to prevent it all I could.

606. Therefore even in a county like yours where organisation on the workers side is perhaps as perfect as in any county in the country, and therefore as in any part of the world, and where you have employers' associations there is still something seriously lacking otherwise there would not be these continued cessations of work?—I think it arises partly from this that you cannot change the prejudices and habits of men in a day or even in years. 20 years is a very short time when you consider the relations which have existed between capital and labour for so long a time. I think what we want to recognise, if I might offer this word of advice, is, that there have been prejudices, warrantable or not warrantable, existing between employers and workmen, and that it will take some time before these die out. We have looked upon each other as being antagonistic to each other, and we have been watchful and wary, none too watchful and wary, but we have ofttimes attributed ill motives when we should not have done so, and consequently strikes have arisen, and until this is beaten out these strikes will continue.

607. From this I should gather that you are hoping as the result of closer acquaintanceship between the two parties, even under existing arrangements, that we shall go on with a gradual development rather than call for any special new arrangement?—I think so.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

608. Now, with regard to the kind of work done by the boys, boys over 16, or till they are called men, what work are they engaged upon; I am not clear upon that?—It would be difficult for me to explain unless I were speaking to a man acquainted with it technically. The putters are the men who go from what we call a flat, and when the tubs go down the pit they are taken by an engine or horse inbye to a flat. The putters then, with exceptions in the county of Durham, have ponies, and they take in the tubs singly to the men, who fill the coals, and bring them out. A word Mr. Patterson used was "limmers." The limmers are the shafts. The boys could not sit on the top of the tub, but they accustom themselves, as I did when I was a boy, to sit on the limmers, and they ride in and out and twist the tub with their shoulders, having learnt that attitude. Of course it is hard work. I am not going to say it is easy, and I am not going to say it is not dangerous, because all work down a pit is dangerous, but the other cases of boys' work ofttimes is not hard. For instance, the rolley-way man. You asked Mr. Patterson what the rolley-way man was. The rolley-way man's work is like that of the platelayer on a railway, to keep the way right, and if the tubs are not off the way he can sit down and get his meals just when he thinks fit, so long as there is not an accident to call him away. I do not think anybody finds fault with him if he takes half an hour, and gets his dinner or his other meals, except there be an accident. He simply walks the whole length, and repairs and puts the things right, lifts the tubs on the way, and things of that kind. Then we have boys who fasten the tubs together with the couplings, or something of that kind.

609. Now respecting the system at present in vogue, when there is no sliding scale the wages are fixed at a given sum, how are they fixed, what are they fixed by?—I may say that we have this idea, this hereditary taint—I do not use the term vulgarly—we have with us the impression of the sliding scale yet, and we had a regard to the results of sliding scales when we fixed our present wages. Since the sliding scale was abolished I think we have got something like 30 per cent. by mutual arrangement with the employers. I can tell you when we got that. Our sliding scale terminated in 1889, and in July 1889 we got 10 per cent. by mutual arrangement with the owners; on November 23rd of that year we got 10 per cent., and in February 1890 we got 5 per cent. Then I would like further to say that we had an application for 10 per cent. of wages, and we had an application in for reduction of hours at the same time. We withdrew the claim for an advance and asked for the shortening of the hours: We said, "Take an hour a day off and give the men "short hours." Our owners met us, and we arranged during last year. On November 19th we agreed to a 5 per cent. advance, which came into operation in January this year, at the same time that the reduction in hours took place.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

610. Your Union bases its claims, I presume, for an advance upon the selling price?—When we had a sliding scale we did, but we generally base our claim upon the best arguments we can get. I would like you to understand that there are some gentlemen here whom I shall have to meet by and by.

611. I want to ascertain this, if you base your scheme upon the selling price, whether it is upon the total output, including that which is consumed at the colliery?—Are you now referring to the sliding scale?

612. I cannot distinguish the present system very clearly from a sliding scale arrangement?—We do not go into these matters that way. We just go into the price, and then what our wage should be with the price we see in the papers and so forth, as Mr. Patterson said; but if you speak now of the 11 years or 12 years of the sliding scale period, then there was an allowance made for consumption of coal at the pits, at the houses and in the engines. The money brought back for the amount of coal sold was divided by the amount of coals drawn, and the nett result was the price.

613. By the amount of coals drawn?—Yes, that makes allowance for home consumption.

614. What effect would it have on such a system if the colliery proprietor happened also to be an iron master in the same neighbourhood; I mean with regard to supplying the coal at a cheap price?—It would have a great effect if he were inclined to work left handedly with us; but we have a little more trust than that I think, at least I hope we have. I must say I have never been one of those men who believe in any cooking, and I speak with the greatest of candour. I am as watchful as most men can be, mind—I like to look round the corner, but I like to go with trust.

615. One word with regard to the fitness of the houses. Are they fit places of habitation generally?—Some of them I openly avow are not.

616. Will you please mention the districts where they are not?—Would that not be invidious?

617. I do not think so?—I must say that I would like to be allowed to do that; but I will mention some that are good if you like.

618. I should like to press the question?—I hope it will not be understood by this Commission or by anybody outside that I am afraid to mention names. I would mention them in a moment only I think it might make an invidious distinction; but if the Committee pleases I will mention three or four collieries offhand. I say generally that there are some houses in the county of Durham which are really unfit, speaking now in modern language, for men to dwell in. I know places where the rows are very close, too close, where there is no accommodation for private necessities. At the same time I know that it would not be right to condemn Durham altogether, because we have some houses that are really good. I speak, as I believe, in the presence of gentlemen now whose houses are

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

surrounded by nice little gardens on all occasions as nearly as can be. There are some places where there are four-room and five-room houses; there are other places where the houses are very bad indeed.

Mr. *Abraham.*

619. What proportion would the bad houses bear to the good houses?—I should think, speaking now just as my mind would allow me to map it out, that three-fourths of the houses in Durham are pretty fair. There are some collieries, old collieries, mind you—the new collieries are different—where the houses are inferior. But if you will allow me to say that I am speaking approximately (I may not be correct) I think that of about three-fourths of the houses we have not much to complain.

620. One-fourth is very inferior?—I should think so.

621. Twenty per cent., you may say, of the whole?—Of some of them you may put two verys together, and say that they are very, very inferior.

Lord *Hartington.*

622. Are those bad houses chiefly old houses or new?—The bad houses are at the old collieries.

623. Old collieries and old houses?—Yes.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

624. Respecting the working hours, of course, we are familiar with the discussion which is going on as to the advisability or otherwise of reducing hours. In your county the pits run 10 hours a day?—Yes, with the exception of Saturdays.

625. I am anxious to understand whether you are hoping for any change to take place, whether you are pressing for any change?—Having just got through the agitation of last year, I would like this Commission to realise the amount of work that was done last year. I was afraid there was a wrong impression on the mind of the Commission when Mr. Patterson said that the boys worked 13 and 14 hours a day, and that we had been 27 years in getting that altered, that is a wrong impression, because the 10 hours a day would date back to 1871, 20 years ago. I speak now from experience. Prior to 20 years ago, 21 years ago, men were hewing coals, in many parts of the county of Durham, 10 hours a day, but when the Mines Regulation Act came into operation we availed ourselves of the opportunity to shorten the hours, and with the concurrence of the owners, we arranged it mutually. Then in the year 1878, under the terms of the first sliding scale by an arbitration submitted to our county court judge, the hours were lengthened in some pits from 10 to 11. Last year, and here (I would like you to see the magnitude of the thing) we took an hour a day off, I should think, 130 or 140 collieries; we reduced them from 11 hours to 10, and the actual hewers' hours were reduced to a maximum of seven hours per day from bank to

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

bank. But at those pits where there are seven hours a day from bank to bank some of the coal hewers would not be down the pit seven hours. Take a man who goes down the pit at 4 o'clock in the morning, his "marrow," as we call him, his mate, goes down at half-past 9. If he is working within 20 minutes' walk of the shafts, as soon as his mate goes in he puts his clothes on and comes out. He will be at the shaft about a quarter or 20 minutes' past 10, so that he has only done about six hours and a half. That is the case of a man working about a mile from the shaft under the seven hours' system. We hope that when we get the opportunity we shall shorten the hours of the boys. I must say here that I believe the boys should not have such long hours as they have, and I speak now with a knowledge of the sense of the men of Durham, it has been taken, as Mr. Patterson said, many a time. I think that we can arrange these things better by negotiation with our employers than by depending upon the state to arrange it for us.

626. I am not concerned about the method just now. I am anxious to understand now whether this double shift system of yours, which prevails in Northumberland and Durham, will be possible under an eight hours' shift system for the men?—A double shift would be possible with an eight hours' shift of men and eight hours' shift of boys.

627. So that there would be no objection to that coming about?—Yes, I have an objection to eight hours for men. I mean eight hours for men who are now engaged 7. There are very few men engaged 10 hours down the pit.

628. I thought there was a considerable proportion?—No, not down the pit.

629. Are they on the bank principally in connexion with the pit the men who work 10 hours?—Yes.

630. And if those who are now running 10 hours were limited to eight hours would it interfere with your double shifts?—You must understand that a number of those men are labourers doing labourers work. There are not very many banksmen in proportion to the number of men employed at any pit. By banksmen I mean men pulling out the tubs and emptying them; the others are screen-men.

631. I thought by Mr. Patterson's statement this morning that you had now reached that stage with regard to the working hours for the various sections in Durham, that you could not well make a further extension of the principle of reducing hours without seriously interfering with the well-being of the trade, that does not seem to be your opinion?—I would like to say, if you will allow me, I speak very feelingly, that had it not been that Mr. Patterson had pledged himself to come before this Commission to-day he would not have been here. I think it was very plain that he was shaky. I think Mr. Patterson, as well as myself, recognises that 10 hours are too long for boys to be down the pit. You will allow me to offer a qualification of his statement therefore.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

632. Then may I understand that you are distinctly favourable to a reduction of the working hours from 10 hour shifts to eight hour shifts?—Personally I am in favour of reducing the boys hours.

633. And the hours of those engaged in and about the mines?—Yes, certainly.

634. To a maximum of eight?—I would not say to a maximum of eight. In arranging the hours you want to take various things into consideration. Now, I speak about the Eight Hours' Bill, I think some occupations are more arduous than others, and if an eight hours' shift has to be fixed with regard to justice to the labour itself, then it would be unfair to have a man who was working very hard and a man who was working at very light work working the same quantum of hours. There wants to be some arrangement made with regard to the lightness and the hardness of the work.

635. One word with regard to the intensity of the work of the hewer, where the hewers were working 10 hours' shifts were they double shifts?—Yes, I worked them myself.

636. Now, comparing the output of the hewers when they were working 10 hours with the output, now that they work seven how do they compare?—Without looking at the returns I could not tell you.

637. I have always been told in Durham that the men exhaust themselves in the seven hours' work, and that they could not work at the same rate for 10 hours?—The men work as hard as they can in Durham from the time of going in to the time of coming out. Speaking from my own experience as a coal-hewer I have worked with the little bit of bread I had to eat in one hand, and the tool in the other. I admit I worked very excessively as men do now.

638. The point I wanted to be clear upon was that you are not at all opposed, but are favourable to a reduction of the working hours to a maximum of eight hours a day?—Certainly, I am; the difference would be as to the means of getting it.

Mr. *Trow.*

639. I wish to ask a question upon a word you used just now. I do not want to bring you into conflict with the employers, but you said that in asking for an advance, you used the best arguments you could, referring to the paper price, &c. I wish to ask you whether your men do not always claim and declare that the paper price is correct when it is high, and always repudiate it when it is low?—I would rather be like a maiden and reserve my answer.

640. My object in putting the question is that I want to prove the unreliability of the paper price, and that the actual price is the only true guide?—I could not enter into that, I do not know about that.

Sir *Edward Harland.*

641. In the early part of your evidence you referred to a strike which lasted, I think you stated, as long as three years?—Yes.

Sir *Edward Harland*—continued.

642. You also mentioned in that, that you had a certain number of men who were still on your books. What shall I say they were doing; were they watching the strike, or what were they doing?—No, not still on our books. I said there was one of the men still off work as the result of that strike, but he was too infirm to be employed: he is still off work.

643. Were no men told off by your Association to speak in plain terms, as pickets, during those three years?—Yes, there were men acting as pickets as long as we thought we had a chance of winning by picketing.

644. Did that picketing continue for three years?—No, not for three years.

645. How long did it continue?—I could not rightly say off-hand. I say, speaking generally, that we employed pickets so long as we thought pickets were useful, but I could not tell you how long that might be, it is so long since.

646. Was the object of those pickets to deter those men who were working quite independently of your Association from continuing to work, or to deter others from giving in and joining them?—The objects of the pickets was, I will not use the word deter, to persuade them from going to work.

647. But would you not think that the word "deter" is perhaps, after all, not very far from the fact?—Well, it might not be very far.

Mr. *Dale.*

648. In what sense did you speak of a strike lasting three years? do you mean that the colliery was idle for three years?—No, I said that it was working with what we considered hardships, but we paid the money for that length of time to the men who were off.

Sir *Edward Harland.*

649. A question was put to you with regard to the number of hours which by your rules of Association its members were allowed to work underground. Is there any restriction in your Association as to the number of hours a man may work?—Yes, we have made that arrangement with the employers. We signed an agreement on the 23rd of last December.

650. Was that an agreement sought to be made by you or by the employers?—We sought it ourselves and we met the owners for a few times.

651. That is to say, that your Association was wishful that there should be less hours worked?—Yes.

652. And ultimately an arrangement of that sort was come to.—Yes

653. What I gather from that is that your Association is in favour of limiting the hours of labour.—Yes, we have done so.

654. Now do you think that it is fair to a young powerful active man in the full prime of life to prevent him from earning as much as he can, during what I may call the summer of his days to prevent him then working, so that he might be able to put something away for himself as a nest-egg when he is old?—If I had not thought it was fair I would not have had a hand in it.

655. I do not ask you personally what you think, but your Association evidently does think it fair?—Our Association thinks it fair that he should be restricted in the way you are indicating, and if I had not thought it was fair to restrain him a little, I would not have had a hand in it.

656. Then I gather that your Association is against men in the full vigour of life, working longer hours, or in other words, being permitted to earn more then, than they otherwise would be quite willing and anxious to do?—Our Association thinks this, that taking the number of years the aggregate average result will be that the man will make as much by being restrained into a proper quantum of hours as he would if he had a free hand.

657. Are you aware of the enormous difference in the hours that are sought to be worked now under the eight hours' movement, and the hours that were worked by equally hard-worked men in various factories. Engineering factories and such like more than 25 years ago, when some 60 or 70 hours a week was a common thing for years and years?—I need not go to engineering I worked down the pit myself in this country hewing coals 10 hours a day, and that was 60 hours a week. As a boy, as Mr. Patterson said, I have been down myself 13 hours day after day.

658. I think we could have no better evidence before us than yours as a witness, that not only physically but mentally there has been certainly no deterioration in your case from having so worked?—I do not know whether it is wise to judge of the generality from an individual, because if you reason from a particular to a general you will be unsafe, I am afraid.

659. There is no exception to your rule; that is to say, that a man, however able and willing to work longer, your Association would object to his doing so?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale.*

660. There is just one point which I think it is well to bring out in connexion with Sir Edward Harland's question and the nature of the coal industry and the manner in which it is carried on, such as that an individual man cannot work longer than any other individual man or that certainly the classes employed, be they hewers or be they banksmen, or whatever they are, must as regards each class, all work the same hours?—Each class must work the same hours as the others.

661. It is in the nature of the industry that that must be so?—Certainly.

Sir *Edward Harland.*

662. That is, so far as the hewers go?—Yes, and the other classes of labourers too.

Mr. *Dale.*

663. The nature of the industry does not admit of the individual man working different hours from his fellows of the same class?—No, certainly not.

Sir *Edward Harland.*

664. Following that up, surely it admitted of that 20 or 25 years ago, by your own showing?—They were all working the same then, and there is another force at work now.

665. Is that force not at work now in the direction of seeking to work less and obtaining more money for it?—I do not see anything wrong in admitting that; everybody tries to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest.

666. That is true, so long as the country can stand it. I can quite understand that?—Yes.

667. You referred to a discharged man as having been hardly treated; he was, what shall we say, a marked man in one colliery, and he went to another colliery to seek employment. He then very soon was discharged, and so on, through three or four. With your great practical experience amongst operatives, have you ever met with men, some who are quite contented and willing and happy to work in the condition in which they have been placed, and earn money and save it, whilst others have been discontented, and not only discontented themselves but sought to make others discontented?—I do not think I need go to the class of miners to find that class of individual. I think you will find them all over. That kind of character is scattered all over the world.

668. Fancy yourself as an employer; if you discovered that such a man as that had found his way into your employment, where, up to that time, everything had been order and peace and contentment, and if you had then discovered that the man was there, and you had sufficient reason to conclude that he was throwing that sort of discontentment about, would you, as an employer, think that you were not doing your duty to yourself or even to your workmen if you were to continue him in such an employment?—You may imagine a prior state of things to that. You may imagine that if I were an employer I had agreed with my workmen that we would settle everything on the principle of negotiation, and that in order to carry out this negotiation it was necessary that the men should have somebody to act for them. You will forgive me if I put this question to you, would you consider it right that the employer should discharge a man from work because he acted in that capacity?

Mr. *Dale.*

669. I think we are rather getting into the region of discussion instead of confining ourselves to question and answer, which is our proper form of procedure?—I think this, under those circumstances, the employer should not discharge a man who was simply looking after, fairly and reasonably and manly, what he considered his rights and those of his fellows.

Sir *Edward Harland.*

670. But would you tell me that the conduct on the part of the man as referred to was legitimate?—If he broke the rules of the colliery and violated the discipline, I think he has a right to be turned out, but if he simply says to his fellows "We are working for too little wage and "the employers are violating the conditions of "our agreement, and we want this carried out." I do not think that man should be discharged.

671. If you found out that that man was going about from one department to another inspiring discontent and dissatisfaction, would you then consider that was a legitimate part of his business?—There is what is considered legitimate dissatisfaction and illegitimate dissatisfaction. If a man is working at his colliery, and he finds that they are imposing upon him wrong conditions, and he calls his fellow workmen together, and he says 'we are not treated fairly here, let us look after it"; I would not consider that man to be breeding discontent.

672. You referred to the unionist subscription being an advantage in saving the poor rates of the district?—Yes.

673. Of course you are not a gold mine, and the funds at your disposal are the earnings of all your members?—Yes.

674. May I ask what those members pay a week into the Association at the present time?—They pay 7*d.* per fortnight.

675. It is this money which has been paid in, I presume, which is of course the outcome in the shape of relief?—Not for the relief fund.

676. Then where does the money for the relief fund come from?—The recipients of the relief fund do not pay a halfpenny towards it. The men who are working in another part of the county levy themselves voluntarily to pay those men who are off work

677. Then it comes as a voluntary tax upon the others?—Yes, upon the others who are working.

Mr. *Abraham.*

678. Do you know of any class of employment in connexion with producing coal, and bringing it out, where a man can go to work and leave it when he likes?—Any class of employment down the pit.

679. Yes?—We expect that a man should stop in the hours we have arranged, if that is what you mean. We have arranged that seven should be the hours from bank to bank, and we expect that every man who is able, if nothing happens, in his place—if no accident arises—to remain in for the hours that are arranged.

680. But if he does not?—If he does not, then of course he must abide the result himself.

681. Then there is no liberty of the subject in that connexion?—No liberty?

682. Within the terms of the agreement?—That is so.

683. Mr. Patterson gave an opinion this morning, to the effect that reducing the hours to eight per day would mean increasing the hours of hewers in Durham by an hour and a half per

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

day. I understand that the hours now there are from bank to bank?—Yes; seven from bank to bank is the maximum. There are some men who are working less, that is, those who are near the shaft.

684. That would be the same under a Bill?—Not if they had to stop eight hours down the pit.

685. From bank to bank?—It would not be from bank to bank.

686. That would increase it an hour only?—Some of them; with some of them it would be an hour and a half. I will explain to you. A man goes down at 4 o'clock in the morning, as I said before, his mate goes down at half-past nine. If he should be a mile from the shaft, he goes the mile in 20 or 25 minutes, say, from the shaft: he is in in 25 minutes' time. That makes it five minutes to 10. The first man puts on his clothes, and as soon as his mate goes in it is the custom that he comes away, and he would be at the shaft to ride at half-past 10.

687. Would legislation in the direction of fixing eight hours from bank to bank make any difference to the arrangements that you have now, making it seven from bank to bank?—He rides now before seven, and if you said eight he would be compelled to stop eight, I presume. Of course, I may be wrong, but it looks like that to me.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

688. Is there any other reason for the opinion that the hours would be increased an hour and a half, and not an hour?—You must not misunderstand me, I do not say that our men object to it on that ground.

689. I do not ask for the objection. I do not know whether you are of the same opinion as Mr. Patterson; kindly explain how it could be?—I say it would increase their hours beyond what they are now working, some of them are working six and a half hours and some seven.

690. Those that are working six and a half would have an increase of an hour and a half?—Certainly.

691. And those who were working seven would have an increase of an hour?—Certainly.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

692. There is one question I should like to ask you in reference to an answer you gave to Mr. Mann. Mr. Patterson told us that, in his opinion, if the men desired shorter hours for the boys the employers would be willing to concede that, is that also your view?—I could not say where Mr. Patterson gets that information from. I have not that idea myself. I have seen no indication of that yet.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at half-past 11.

SECOND DAY.

Commission Room, Westminster Hall, Thursday, 9th July 1891.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE MARQUIS OF HARTINGTON, M.P.

MR. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

The Right Hon. H. H. FOWLER, M.P.
Mr. W. ABRAHAM, M.P.
Mr. G. BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Sir E. HARLAND, Bart., M.P.
Sir W. LEWIS.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.
Mr E. TROW.

Mr. J. C. BOLTON, M.P., Mr. TOM MANN, and Mr. H. TAIT (Group B.), and the Right Hon. Sir J. E. GORST, Q.C., M.P., the Right Hon. LEONARD COURTNEY, M.P., and Mr. M. AUSTIN (Group C.) also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Joint Secretaries.

Mr. JOSEPH TOYN called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

693. You are the president and agent of the Cleveland Miners' Association?—Yes.

694. You have held that office for about 15 years?—Yes.

695. And indeed the office of president for rather longer than that time?—About 16½ years.

696. Prior to that time you worked yourself in the Cleveland ironstone mines as a horse driver, as a miner, and ultimately as a deputy?—I did.

697. You were for 20 years in one or other of those capacities?—Yes.

698. The evidence you propose to give has relation to ironstone mining in Cleveland and North Riding of Yorkshire?—Yes.

699. About what number of miners are employed in that district?—The total number, according to the Government inspector's returns for last year, is 6,579. That includes underground and above ground—all about the mines in Cleveland.

700. Are you able to state what proportion of those men are employed underground?—I am not prepared to say that, but it can be got out of the Government inspector's returns.

701. About what is the membership of your Association?—As near as I can tell, about 5,400 perhaps.

702. I think there are included also in your Association the limestone quarrymen of Weardale in the county of Durham?—Yes.

703. The limestone quarrymen are not very numerous; they are not a very large proportion?—They number perhaps about 700 or 800.

704. Would you describe briefly the hours of working in the Cleveland mines; at what hour do the miners go to work?—The first shift goes in at about 6 o'clock and comes out at 2 o'clock. Where they are working shift work the second shift goes in at 2 and comes out at 10.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

705. It is not, however, the practice in the Cleveland district, as it is in the county of Durham, to have habitually a second shift of a full number of men?—I do not think it is worked to the same extent. Perhaps there is a number of mines working shift work, but not very many, I think.

706. Would the number of men going in at the second shift be very much less than the number going in at the first shift?—A great deal less.

707. A miner, therefore, if he is on what may be called the main shift, goes in about 6 and leaves about 2?—Yes; I can say, if you will allow me here, that we recognise the eight hours' principle from bank to bank, and that principle has been in operation for about 18 years.

708. What longer hours on that first or second shift are worked underground by men other than miners?—There are some engaged in what we call getting the work away. They vary from 8 to 10 hours.

709. You are speaking of underground men?—Yes, underground men.

710. But the large proportion of these working underground will come out at the end of the eight hours?—Yes.

711. Then the surface men?—The surface men are working 54 hours a week; that is, the actual labourers, but the men who are engaged about the pit-heads generally stand till the work is got out.

712. That would keep them on an average about what number of hours?—Probably about nine, I should think.

713. Is the work of the miner paid by the ton?—By the ton. The present tonnage rate is 10½*d.* That is the gross rate, out of which he has to pay for powder and candles.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

714. What per-centage is that in excess of what may be called the standard rate?—That is the standard rate. There are other rates, such as consideration in tonnage, and a little in yardage occasionally.

715. I mean what per-centage is this 10½*d.* in excess of what are called the standard rates as measured by varying states of trade. Are you getting 10 per cent., or what other per-centage, in advance of the standard rates?—I do not exactly understand you.

716. You had a sliding scale?—Yes: at least there has been one.

717. Is it now in existence?—It is not in existence now.

718. But under that sliding scale certain rates were called standard rates, to which per-centages were added or from which per-centages were deducted according to the varying prices of pig iron?—Is that so?—Yes.

719. And although the sliding scale is no longer in operation, those standard rates are maintained as a matter of record in the accounts between the employer and the employed?—Yes; the employers count them at any rate. I may say (perhaps it will answer the question) that 1*d.* per ton on 9½*d.* is about 10 per cent.—nearly so; 9½*d.* is the 1879 rate—the standard rate, and the tonnage rate is now 10½*d.*, leaving us what we would call 10 per cent. on the 1879 standard.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

720. That is, 10 per cent. above the standard of 1879?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale.*

721. Is there any system of payment through sub-contractors?—None.

722. Is there any system of fines, or stoppages?—Yes, there are two systems in operation. One to a very small extent is made in the shape of deductions in the weight of the mineral sent out—in accordance with the amount of shale or dirt that is sent out. I think that is only in operation to the best of my recollection at about two mines in the whole district. The other system is by small money fines, say 6*d.* increased perhaps to 1*s.* if more of it is sent out, and in very bad cases it is doubled again perhaps, or more than that.

723. You are describing a system of fine or forfeiture in consequence of there having been filled into the tub other material than ironstone?—Yes.

724. Bottom shale or whatever it may be called?—Yes. I may say, with your permission, that the money fines are agreed to in a sense because we have never gone hard and fast to stick to the Mines Regulation Act as that Act only provides for deductions we think in weight: and then there must be an agreement made. But seeing that it is so injurious to the iron trade to send out sulphur and dirt we have as an association allowed the small fines to be put on to try to keep the stone as clean as possible.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

725. Is there any truck system in Cleveland?—I think not. I am not aware of any. Money for powder and house rent and coals and money for the doctor is stopped off by an arrangement between the employers and the workmen for convenience.

726. Then the Cleveland miner has not, like the Durham miner, a free house?—He has not a free house.

727. Do the houses in Cleveland occupied by the miners belong to a considerable extent to the owners of the mines?—To a very great extent they do.

728. But the owners charge rent?—The owners charge rent for them all.

729. About what rent per week?—The rents vary from 2*s.* up to 4*s.* 6*d.* I believe I shall be safe if I say that the average rent is about 3*s.* 5*d.*

730. Are coals allowed free to the Cleveland miners?—No, they have to pay for the coal.

731. Is the miner free to buy his coals where he chooses?—He is free to buy his coal where he chooses, but in many instances he gets them off the employer. I believe at the present time the bulk of the employers supply coal at about 14*s.* per ton.

732. Is there any garden ground attached to cottages?—Yes, nearly all of them have gardens—small plots.

723. Is there any extra payment made for them?—In some instances there are, in some instances there are not.

734. Then in fact there are no advantages given to or enjoyed by the Cleveland miner; he simply gets in money that which represents the value of his services?—Yes, I am not aware that there are any perquisites in the shape of rent or coal; he gets it in wages and has to pay in current coin of the realm back what he gets.

735. Is there any system of smart money?—Yes, smart money is paid at a number of the mines in the Cleveland district; 5*s.* per week.

736. That is in the case of men meeting with accidents when engaged in their work?—Yes.

737. That is continued for as long as a man may be laid up or for some reasonable time?—For a reasonable time.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

738. Is smart money universal in the Cleveland district?—It is not universal, but I might almost say that where the smart money is not paid as a rule there is something given by the firm. There is one very large firm who do not pay smart money, but they allow 2*s.* 9*d.* per week for house rent and a load of coals every six weeks. That is given in lieu of smart money.

Mr. *Dale.*

739. How frequently are the wages paid in Cleveland?—Weekly.

740. And do you consider the system of paying wages weekly more advantageous than that of paying them at longer intervals?—We have considered it so.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

741. Was it formerly paid fortnightly?—Fortnightly.

742. Was it at the request of the Cleveland miners that it was shortened and paid weekly?—Yes.

743. What are the advantages, do you think, of its being paid weekly?—Well, the men get the money oftener, and it enables them to go to a ready-money market.

744. In fact the system, as compared with paying fortnightly, gives every man capital in his pocket to the extent of one week's earnings always?—Yes. If you will allow me I might say that first of all the idea came from the men to go in for weekly pays, and the mine owners met them and discussed the matter, and tried it at five or six mines as an experiment, for about six months. They afterwards agreed to pay them weekly, and that continues up to the present time.

745. Perhaps that rather naturally leads to the question are there official relationships between your Union and the mine owners in Cleveland?—As a rule they are good.

746. But do they exist in the first place?—Yes.

747. There is an official recognition by the Cleveland mine owners of the Miners' Union?—Yes

748. Is there a Joint Committee?—Yes, it has been established, I think, 19 years.

749. You heard the evidence given yesterday by Mr. Patterson and Mr. Wilson. Is the procedure of the Cleveland Mine Owners' and Miners' Joint Committee somewhat similar to that in the Durham coal trade?—It is somewhat similar there are some things in connexion with it that are a little different. They have a paid chairman in Durham, in Cleveland we have not: the chairman is elected at each meeting.

750. They generally elect one of the employers as chairman?—Yes. I have here a copy of the rules of our Association with the rules of the Joint Committee. (*See Appendix* 2.) I think there has been some slight alteration in the rules since those were printed. We had formerly, I think, to give three days' notice before we could bring any question before the Joint Committee; it is jointly agreed to alter those rules to make it seven days.

751. There is no casting vote given to the chairman?—I believe not.

752. But you generally elect one of the employers as chairman?—Yes.

753. May that be taken as an evidence of mutual confidence and good relationship?—Decidedly.

754. Does the Joint Committee in Cleveland, like the Joint Committee in Durham, deal with local questions only?—Only local questions.

755. How are county questions or district questions dealt with?—They are dealt with by the general body of owners meeting the representatives of the men.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

756. Can you put in the sliding scale that last prevailed in Cleveland?—That is the latest scale. (*See Appendix* 3.)

757. Do you remember when that scale was terminated, and by whom?—It was terminated about two years ago by the miners.

758. Was that because they were dissatisfied with the system of a sliding scale, or that they were dissatisfied with the basis of the scale then prevailing?—They were dissatisfied chiefly with the basis. There are other points in connexion with it where there is a reason why they do not prefer the scale. I believe the base-rate, as one of the chief points, was, as they thought, too low. Another reason was that it did not operate fast enough. As the owners contract to sell their pig-iron perhaps four or five months ahead, in a rising market it took them a long time before they got the advance, seeing that it only changed the price once in three months; that was another reason why they objected to it. A third reason was because when the scale was signed, or soon after it was signed, we lost about half our members; we lost a large number of the members of the Association.

759. To what do you attribute that?—To tell you my own opinion, and I think I speak the opinion of a good many of the men, the men as a rule, if they can get a thing without paying for it do not care about paying for it. We have cases where men have been heard to express themselves that the scale is now signed for two years, and therefore there is no call for them to pay any more into the Union.

760. Upon what was this scale based, upon the price of what?—Upon the price of No. 3 pig-iron.

761. Not upon the price of ironstone?—Not upon the price of ironstone.

762. What was the reason for choosing pig-iron instead of ironstone?—Our men wished to have it based on ironstone, but when the matter was gone into with the owners we found there was only a small number of the firms that were selling the stone. Most of the firms, a very large number of them, produced the stone and used it at their own furnaces, and they did not consider that the small amount that went into the market would give a satisfactory price and form a base for the whole of them to work upon as a base rate. Therefore it was agreed to base the wages altogether upon No. 3 pig-iron.

763. How was the price of No. 3 Cleveland pig-iron ascertained?—It was ascertained by proper chartered accountants getting the invoice price from the owners' books.

764. Such accountants being appointed by whom?—The accountants were appointed, one by the mine owners and one by the miners, and I believe there were other interests as well. The railway company, for instance, had one appointed, and the blastfurnacemen had one appointed. I think there were four accountants who ascertained the price at the same time for each quarter.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

765. Does that mean that there was running a similar scale, or a somewhat similar scale, between the blast-furnace proprietors and the men they employed?—Yes.

766. Based in a similar manner on the ascertainment of the price of No. 3 pig iron?—Yes.

767. So that that added as it were a third accountant?—Yes.

768. Then is it within your knowledge that the North-Eastern Railway Company made their rates for iron-making materials depend to some extent upon similar ascertainments?—Yes. I have been informed so, and I know they appointed an accountant to take out the prices on their behalf.

769. Is the labour of mining in Cleveland irregular, either in accordance with the seasons of the year or the conditions of trade?—There is a little irregularity. The conditions of trade cause it. The seasons of the year make no difference.

770. Just going back for a moment to the house question. It would have been well to ask you, while we were upon that, what upon the whole is the character of the houses in Cleveland?—On the whole I think they are fairly good.

771. Do you wish to make any observations on the question of labour-saving machinery?—I do.

772. Will you kindly state what you desire to lay before the Commission?—We have had these drilling machines introduced into the Cleveland district for some years. At the present time, so far as I know, there are five mines that are using the drilling machines. I think that the workmen as a rule have not derived the benefit from them that they ought to have done. The machines were introduced as an experiment, and in the former stages of the introduction the men who were engaged with them were not members of our Association, and they drifted into a way of working them and dividing the money: that we did not approve of. Of course after working for a considerable time it established a custom. I do not think it has been tried to be altered, that is so far as as our Union is concerned, nor by the employers. Each machine at the present time, I should think, will dispense with at least 10 practical miners. Now where these machines have been introduced, of course the miners have got their notices, and whether they could find work or not they had to go. I am of opinion, perhaps you will think it is rather unique, that where a machine is introduced and a number of labourers are put out, either the patentee or somebody ought to find work for the men or to get them removed to where they can get work, when they are turned out like that. In the working of these machines there is one man engaged to direct the drilling department. There is another engaged in charging after the machine. These two men at the present time will be probably getting from 8*s.* to 10*s.* per day each. Now good practical miners have had

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

to go filling after the machines, and they probably do not get more than 4*s.* or 4*s.* 6*d.* I have known young fellows to direct this drilling; places have been chalked out where to put the holes; that has been done for them for a few weeks by practical men, and then, although probably they have never seen a mine in their lives before, they direct this machinery and get twice as much as a practical miner who had to clear out for the drilling machine is getting who is filling after. If you will allow me to give my opinion about the matter——

773. That is what we should wish?—I do not want to say that we should object to the labour-saving machinery, because it is too late in the day for a thing of that sort, but I do think that the working men ought to benefit from the introduction of labour-saving machinery equally as well as the employers or the men who patent the machinery. Instead of that we have found that the workmen get the worst of it.

774. There are two grounds of complaint. You think that something might have been devised not to have thrown the men out of employment who were not needed in the same number when the stone came to be got by machinery?—Yes, and dividing the money.

775. Then your next complaint is that the money paid in respect to a certain gang or set of men attached to a machine should be divided more equally?—Yes. I think that when a machine is introduced requiring 12 men—there are about 13, I think, to each machine as a rule, one is a youth just to charge the drills—the 12 men should select their own men and they should all share alike.

776. Would you expect the owner to have any interest in objecting to that?—To tell you candidly, we have not asked the owners.

777. Would it not seem almost on the face of it as if it would be a matter of indifference to him, as long as he paid the same aggregate sum, how it was divided if that division gave satisfaction?—Yes, I have no doubt it would.

778. Have you any other observations to make in connexion with machinery or its introduction?—No, I do not know that I have.

779. What is the height of the seam generally in Cleveland in which a miner works?—I think what is called the Cleveland main seam would be about 8 ft. or 8 ft. 4 in., or something of that, and mines vary from 6 ft., and we have one mine, I believe—a very large one—where it is as high as 20 and 21 ft.

780. Have you any complaint to make or any observations to offer on what on page 4 of our official questions is described as "Dismissal of "representative delegates, refusal of unionists "to work with non-unionists, the use of the "black list, the mutual relations of employers "and Trades Unions generally"?—I cannot remember a case of any Trades Union official being discharged for many years—there is no such thing now. I believe if we could prove that a manager discharged a man for taking any part in our Union the Joint Committee would deal with the question and rein-

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

state him if he had been discharged for that reason.

781. You are of opinion that the Joint Committee, without having had a special case of that kind under its notice, has expressed itself in terms implying that it would take cognisance of such a case if it were to occur?—That is so.

782. Is there any difficulty experienced in Cleveland in connexion with the refusal of unionists to work with non-unionists?—There is not at the present time.

783. Has there been lately?—I have known a little feeling, but I think the union men have drifted down a bit quieter now.

784. Has it occasioned any strike in Cleveland in recent years?—There has not been a strike since 1874—a general strike—and in fact that was not a strike. We said it was a lock-out, and the owners said it was not, and I think it was finally agreed to call it a "cessation of labour" to take the harshness off "strike" and "lock-out."

785. That is 17 years ago?—That was in 1874.

786. Have there been local strikes to any extent?—There have been one or two local strikes during the last decade, but of very small importance. We paid to the men, I think, nearly 300*l*. It was a mine where the employers did not belong to the associated employers, and they refused to meet us. They inflicted a reduction of 15 per cent. on the men's wages. We tried to open up negotiations with them with the view of settling the matter in a conciliatory manner, and they positively refused to meet us. We at once set to work to get our men removed to some other mines, and altogether it cost us somewhere near 300*l*.

787. Was there any refusal on the part of any other mine owners to employ these men?—No.

788. Mr. Wilson, as you may have noticed, yesterday put in certain statements showing the amounts paid by the Durham Miners' Union for sick and accident relief and various other things. Have you any similar statement you would like to put in?—I have no figures to put in at all. Our men pay 2*d*. a week for a labour fund, but in addition to protecting the labour, we contribute pretty freely to infirmaries and convalescent homes. We send men to these places.

789. Do they contribute individually to infirmaries and so on?—No; they pay 2*d*. a week, and out of that general fund the whole body contributes to infirmaries and so forth. We have no sick fund attached to it, but we are a part of the Durham and Northumberland Permanent Injuries Fund. We have that fund in our district which, of course, requires separate payments. I think they pay about 4*d*. a week into that fund, and the rules, of course, affect us precisely the same as Durham and Northumberland.

790. Do you desire to make some observations upon the hours and conditions of labour of firemen and other men?—Mr. Strong will give you that.

791. Have you any observations as to the "means of avoiding or arranging strikes, and "promoting cordial relations between capital "and labour"?—Yes. I think in the first place that the best mode of settling wages is by conciliation; but in order to carry that out properly it requires both parties to be well organised. I think it is preferable to any other mode of settlement, because it helps to promote cordial relations with the employers, and it helps to cement them. It does not leave any bickering or ill-feeling towards one another. My chief point is this: If you settle by conciliation you make a settlement with practical men on both sides. If you put it into the hands of an umpire, very often you put it into the hands of a man who is not a practical man. Now I think the best way is to meet at the table, to discuss all the points and everything in connexion with the case, and when you have strained every point that you possibly can, and each party finds that it is impossible to go beyond that, it is best to settle it at that. I have known several cases where we have not had power to settle it, and it has gone to an umpire, and the umpire has given us worse terms than we could have made ourselves.

792. Therefore your feeling is that the establishment of a council of conciliation, as it were, is the best mode of adjusting any questions that may arise?—Most decidedly.

793. Are you in favour of a sliding scale of wages—I mean as a system. I am not speaking of any particular scale or any particular basis, but to the system of a sliding scale?—If the difficulties could be got over that I named before, I am. It is difficult to say when you do get a proper base-rate. We are living in an age of progress, and I suppose there are very few things that there is any finality to. Of course if you could get a sound and good basis, and get it to operate faster, that would do. And then there is the other point, if we could keep our members. I should most decidedly say, if those things are secured, that that is the best system. I believe it gives stability to trade, but when you cannot keep the members—of course it is like taking the life and soul out of your union if you lose nearly half your members—I would rather keep the members and let the sliding scale go.

794. Do you think that the existence of a joint committee conducted in the manner you have described tends not only to avert local disputes, but to generally improve the relationships of the parties, and more especially to prevent anything like undue exercise of authority by managers or sub-managers; do you think it checks any disposition to arbitrary acts on the part of managers or sub-managers?—Oh, yes. In my experience as a workman in the mine, and in my official capacity, I have seen it over and over again. I am certain that had it not been for the organisations existing, and the Joint Committee, there would have been very many strikes. It is difficult to tell, but I know that before it was a

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

continual thing. Any morning nearly the place might be stopped. Now such a thing cannot happen, because if there is a dispute between the men and the manager, and they cannot see their way clear to rectify it at once, the men go on, knowing that the Joint Committee will take the matter up and try to give them justice. There is sometimes a little delay with cases being settled, but not to the extent that was spoken of yesterday by Mr. Patterson and Mr. Wilson. As a rule, if there has been a delay, and either party has been to blame for it, we generally let the award date in accordance with the time the notice was filed. I have known men have money to take for three months back. I have never known owners to have to withdraw it three months back, because it is very difficult to get the money back once paid, but I have known the owner's deduction to be dated back for a time to give the owners fair play. That is how the case is dealt with. If there has been unnecessary delay by either party the award is made to date back accordingly.

795. Have you any other statement or suggestion to make for our information?—I do not know that I have direct.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

796. I do not think you mentioned whether any boys were employed in the Cleveland mines?—We have a few boys, but not so many probably in proportion to the number of men as some of the other mines may have. It is very heavy work in Cleveland. We have some boys, but not so many.

797. How many hours are the boys employed?—The drivers, the boys who drive the horses, work for 8½ hours from bank to bank. That is agreed to by the Joint Committee.

798. That is to say, half an hour more than the men work?—Yes.

799. Their work, however, is lighter?—It is heavy work in the Cleveland mines.

800. But the boys' work is lighter than that of the men?—Oh, yes.

801. Is there any discontent with the hours which the boys have to work in the district?—I do not think there is any discontent with the drivers, but there are a few other boys who are what we call getting the work away on the inclines, and so on. They are asking to be put on the eight hours principle.

802. Would there be any practical difficulty in adopting that system?—We have brought it before the mine owners, and of course they object to it. We have it under consideration yet, but there are not very many of that class. I do not suppose there are 300 of them altogether.

803. But you are doing what you can to reduce the hours?—Yes.

804. And that is now the subject of negotiation on the Joint Committee?—It is not just on the Joint Committee, but we have it before our Association, gathering statistics ready for it.

805. And if you came to the conclusion that it was desirable to press that upon the owners,

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

the next step I suppose would be to bring it before the Joint Committee?—Yes; before the general body of owners. It is a county question.

806. I think you said there were a certain number of men working underground whose hours of labour were more than eight?—They are in the class that I have just been describing to you; there are not many of them.

807. But those are principally boys?—Boys and men who are getting the work away, such as rolley-way men, and men on the engine plane, and the men who have to get the work out.

808. When the larger questions of which you spoke arise for settlement, what is the first step taken. If the men desire to bring a particular question before the owners what is the first step they take?—The first step taken is to send a deputation to the manager, and ask him if he can agree to the change. If he refuses then it is filed for the Joint Committee; notice is sent in to the mine owners' secretary seven clear days before asking him to call a committee meeting. Then the question is discussed, and if it cannot be settled at the Joint Committee, it depends upon the size of the question; if it is a small thing there is one referee put in by each side; if it is a larger one and a thing that requires two, they put in two on each side; those referees have full power given to them from the Joint Committee to settle it. If they fail to agree, which they invariably do, the four referees choose an umpire, and his decision has to be final and binding for three months.

809. You are speaking now of the smaller questions which can be decided by the Joint Committee or referred by them to an umpire?—Yes.

810. But there are also larger questions—questions affecting the county as a whole?—As to the larger questions, the general wages question for the whole county, the practice has been settled for many years. We had a strike in 1874; the men recommenced work at a reduction; the next time there was any change to be made it was referred to arbitration—to an umpire. Sir Rupert Kettle acted as umpire twice in Cleveland, or three times; Serjeant Wheeler acted as umpire; Sir FitzJames Stephen acted as umpire. That mode of settlement went on up to 1879. In the autumn of 1879 we agreed to form a sliding scale, a copy of which has been put in—or rather the one put in is a slight improvement on the first one that was adopted—and we made the sliding scale for, I think, generally two years. We had sliding scales for 9½ years. The last scale terminated about two years ago. Since then we have met the owners in a body and made our claim, and we finally fought the thing out and settled it without referring it to anyone. We have a case on the board at the present time. We have had no umpire since. The men are slightly—in fact they are not slightly, but they are very much—against general arbitration. They would rather settle a case by conciliation than have an umpire

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

such as I have been describing to you for general questions.

811. Do all questions come in the first instance before the Joint Committee even though afterwards they have to be referred to a meeting of the owners and the operatives?—All local questions come to the Joint Committee and all general questions to the owners.

812. But do these general questions come in the first instance before the Joint Committee?—No, it does not necessarily follow that they should.

813. Now with regard to the dislike of arbitration. Do you think that dislike arises from a feeling among the men that the arbitrators have generally given decisions which bear hardly upon them?—I think so.

814. You think that is the general impression among them?—I do.

815. And you say you have known cases in which a question was referred to arbitration and the decision of the arbitrator was more unfavourable to the men than the terms which they could have secured by direct negotiation with the owners?—Yes. When I said that I was thinking about local cases, but I have in my mind's eye one case of a district question where I believe from what I gathered from one of the owner's party that the umpire took off more than they expected.

816. You made some remarks in connexion with certain labour-saving machinery. I did not quite follow the description you gave, or understand how far you thought the introduction of this machinery benefited the fewer men employed, and how far it benefited the owners?—I should say that it benefits the owners and about two men in twelve.

817. Then would you explain on what principle the men are paid when they are working with these machines?—They are paid by the ton.

818. And they get just the same price per ton when they are working with the machines as previously they got when they were working without the machines?—No; the machine-drill rate is not so much as the hand-drill rate.

819. How is the machine rate fixed: is that by mutual agreement?—We had an arbitration case once as to how the gradations were to take place. The umpire decided to give the machine men ¾*d.* against 1*d.* for the hand-drill men. Suppose we were going to get an advance of 10 per cent., 1*d.* a ton, the machine men would get among the whole of them ¾*d.*

820. You are speaking only of an advance now?—Yes.

821. But how about the original basis of wages?—I could not say. It was taken, I suppose, very much according to the earnings at first to decide how much the base-rate would give them.

822. You say that 12 or 13 men are employed upon each of these machines?—I should think about 12 men and a boy.

823. And that in addition to those 12 men they displace some 10 other miners?—About 10. I am speaking as near as I can. I think it would be 10. I know the output varies: some of the machines send out sometimes 130 or 140 or 150 tons in a day; they have done that. A hand-drill miner probably at the present time will send out about six tons.

824. Would the amount of money divided between the 12 or 13 men who are now employed on these machines equal the amount formerly paid to the 22 or 23 men?—No; it is divided in this way: the driller and the charger have a contract direct to themselves, and they put a boy on who changes the drills for them. Then the fillers have a contract; but the driller and the charger have a so much better price that it enables them to get about double what the others are getting.

825. Could not the division of wages be made a subject to be considered by the Joint Committee?—Well, we have never brought it there. It is rather a complex thing.

826. But it appears to me your complaint is rather against the division as between the workmen themselves than against the division as between the workmen and the employers?—Yes, and I should not be surprised if in the end there was not the most opposition there.

827. Most opposition where?—With the men themselves.

828. That is to say, those who at present gain by the use of these labour-saving machines would be against introducing any change in the present system of distribution?—I believe they would.

829. You do not think the employers themselves would object to a redistribution of the wages?—We have not asked them, but I do not know that they would.

830. You told us that so far as you are aware you do not know of any case where a man has been dismissed for taking an active part in union organisation?—Not for many years.

831. And you further think that if such case was to arise it would be a case of which the Joint Committee would take cognisance?—It would. The chairman of the Joint Committee the other day gave us to understand that.

832. I do not know if you heard Mr. Wilson say yesterday in answer to a question from me that such a case would not be taken cognisance of by the Joint Committee in Durham?—Yes, I heard him say so.

833. That is not the case in the Cleveland district?—It is not the case in the Cleveland district.

834. Does the Joint Committee take cognisance of dismissal of workmen for various causes?—If the workman could trace his dismissal to any particular thing they would take cognisance of it.

835. There is no general refusal on the part of the owners to submit cases of dismissal to the Joint Committee?—You would have to trace the thing home to some cause or else they would not take cognisance of it. There is a provision for 14 days' notice on each side, and without he could trace it to some particular thing they would not take notice of it.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

836. Have you passed any resolution in your district with regard to legislation on the hours of labour?—No.

837. You are not in favour in your district of limiting the hours of labour by Act of Parliament further than has already been done?—No, we are not in favour of it by Act of Parliament.

Mr. *Burt.*

838. With reference to smart money, I think you mentioned that it is very generally paid, but there are exceptions in which some other allowance is given in lieu of smart money?—Yes.

839. I think you mentioned that one firm gives a certain amount as house-rent and an allowance of fire coal; is that allowance only during the time a miner may be incapacitated from following his employment?—Incapacitated by accident. It is a very large firm; they have three or four large mines. In case of a fatal accident, if a man and his wife have lived in a company house prior to the accident, they allow the widow to remain in a company house or house equal to 2*s.* a week, and give her a load of coals every six weeks.

840. And I think that you said that although the miners have not any allowance of coal, they purchase it often of their employers?—They do.

841. Do they get it at something like cost price?—Well, the owners tell us that they do; they say they do not make any profit out of it.

842. With regard to weekly pays, you have had weekly pays for many years?—Yes.

843. And the system is quite satisfactory?—Quite satisfactory.

844. Has the change of system had any effect in the way of increasing or diminishing the steadiness of the men? Is there more or less drinking? Has it had any effect at all?—I think as far as we can learn there is a good deal less irregularity now than there used to be.

845. The men begin work more regularly on the Monday than they did when you had fortnightly pay?—We think so. We have a co-operative store in about every mining village we have in Cleveland, and the weekly pays enable the men to go with ready money, and they conduct the store on the ready money principle as a rule, and it has been a good deal of saving to the men in that respect.

846. How often does your Joint Committee meet?—It depends on what cases we have. The rule is, I think, about once a month, but I think we sometimes go four or five months. If we have not sufficient cases to make a day's work, and the gentlemen on the other side as a rule have a lot of engagements, we do not like to call them together and put them to the expense and trouble of meeting unless there is about work enough for a day.

847. As compared, for instance, with the county of Durham, you are very advantageously situated?—Yes.

848. You have not near the number of men employed?—No.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

849. Nor have you the number probably of differences of a complex kind?—Oh, nothing like in comparison to them.

850. Then your chairman has not a casting vote?—No, I do not think it is in the rules, but if it is he never uses it.

851. Have you any difficulty in deciding questions in case the representatives of the owners and those of the workmen are equally balanced?—According to Rule 1 we are bound to appoint an umpire.

852. Does that frequently happen?—Yes, it happens occasionally.

853. Do the representatives of the workmen and the representatives of the employers act usually in what we may call a judicial capacity, or do they generally vote steadily in support of their own side?—I think, when the thing has been pretty well threshed out, invariably when they do agree they agree without voting at all. It is very rare it ever comes to a vote of the Joint Committee.

854. With regard to the machines you spoke of, are those drilling machines?—Yes.

855. I think you mentioned that there are five mines in which they are used?—There are five mines in which they are used. There is another mine where there is one machine which has been tried as an experiment, the motive power being water to compress the air.

856. How many mines have you altogether?—I think in the North Riding about 22.

857. Are those five large or small, or are they about average mines?—There are one or two of them rather small, but about average taking them altogether.

858. Are the machines costly?—I believe they are.

859. Do the employers find them?—Yes.

860. Your contention is that the miners have not derived the benefit that they are fairly entitled to?—They have not.

861. Is there a strong feeling of that kind among the men generally?—Yes; I believe I shall be safe in saying that there is a strong feeling, probably not so strong now as it used to be. They seem to look upon it as a thing that has to happen, and that they will have to put up with it.

862. I gather from what you said in answer to the Chairman, and also in answer to Mr. Balfour, that the complaint is really between workman and workman rather than between the workmen in the aggregate and the employer. Is that so?—I think if it was fairly gone into it would be so, but the machines were simply introduced at first as an experiment. The men were paid by the day to work them until they got into a system to see what they could do, and then they were put on tonnage, and of course the two men that I have described to you have got the bulk of the money, when other good men and better than those have had to go filling behind them for half the money or less.

863. Have you through the Union made an effort to get a more equitable distribution?—We

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

have not, for the very good reason that we do not take cases up until they are sent in. If a case was sent in of the description I have been speaking of we should take it up.

864. If there was a very strong feeling among the majority of the workmen, it would come up, one would think ?—It has never been taken up. I know there is a strong feeling against the machines, because they are often wished at the bottom of the sea.

865. You have had no general strikes since 1874 ?—No.

866. And very few local strikes ?—We have not had more than one local strike in Cleveland since 1874, and that was only for a week or two.

867. You mentioned a case in which the employer refused to meet the representatives of the workmen ?—Yes.

868. Was the employer a member of the Mine Owners' Association ?—No.

869. Have you had any strikes in mines in which the owner was a member of the Mine Owners' Association ?—No ; it could not happen under the Joint Committee rules. If this owner I have been speaking of had belonged to the Association there could not have been a strike—otherwise the rules would have been violated.

870. So that your Joint Committee, and your method of conciliation that you advocated so strongly, has prevented you having any strike whatever, under the jurisdiction of the Joint Committee, since 1874 ?—Yes, it has entirely prevented it.

871-2. Would you be in favour of the establishment of a permanent board of conciliation and arbitration, or do you think it is better just to extemporise one ? Do you mean for the Government to appoint an umpire ?—No. I think it is better to leave it as it is, and choose your referees when the case arises.

873. You mentioned that the miners of Cleveland subscribe to the hospitals, to the infirmaries, the convalescent homes, and such like ?—Yes.

874. Have you many accidents in Cleveland ? —Yes, a large number.

875. You have not explosions such as we have in coal-mining districts ?—We have had them slightly. We have had, perhaps, four or five men who lost their lives through gas. But, according to the best returns that we can get, there is about one man in every eight who happens with an accident every year, which renders him idle for about 3½ weeks. Last year there were nine fatal accidents. The fatal accidents have been much fewer these last few years than they used to be. I should think we averaged for many years above 20 fatal accidents every year—not through explosions, but through falls and barring down, and that sort of thing. It is very dangerous work in the Cleveland mines.

876. Have you much timbering ?—A good deal of timbering. There are deputies employed ; the men do not do it themselves.

877. The Cleveland miners are under the Coal Mines Regulation Act ?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

878. Have you any amendments to suggest to the Mines Regulation Act ?—We think there is room for several amendments. First of all for some years we have been in favour of a Minister of Mines, and we are also in favour of practical working men being appointed as sub-inspectors. We think that the standard of qualification under the present system of appointing inspectors is too high ; that is my opinion at any rate. We think it ought to be made a little lower so that men who could pass a reasonable examination should be appointed sub-inspectors. I could give you a case in point. I know a man that was fifth in a list of 14 and got a manager's first class certificate, and when he came to be examined to go on as assistant inspector he was in no place at all.

879. You are aware that under the Mines Act workmen have the power to appoint some of their number to inspect. Do the Cleveland miners avail themselves of that provision ?—Occasionally.

880. But not systematically ?—No. I perhaps might explain to the Commission that there are probably from 1,300 to 1,500 tons of blasting powder used in a twelvemonth, and you will see that it will cause a good deal of smoke, and if a district became smoky the men would probably have a meeting and appoint two men to go round according to the Mines Act and inspect the mine. We are in favour of further legislation on that point. The present Mines Act only provides for men who are practical miners to go and inspect on behalf of the workmen, and we want it altered so that men who are or have been practical miners may be appointed. Perhaps some of the members of the Commission will remember that when the Bill was brought into the House of Commons it was sent up to the Lords with the words I have mentioned, " practical miners or have been." When it got to the Lords they cut " have been " out and sent it back, and it was passed officially that they must be practical miners now. That debars checkweighmen or such as ourselves that have worked a long time in the mines altogether from being appointed by the men.

881. You want the Act amended ?—I want the Act amended so that it shall be " practical miners or have been practical miners." We do not wish to thrust anybody upon them who has not been one.

882. You mentioned that you have limestone quarrymen associated with you ?—Yes.

883. 600 or 700 ?—We have men that are working in 11 quarries in connexion with this.

884. Are the quarries under any system of inspection ?—No.

885. Is there any feeling that they should be? —Yes, there is a feeling ; the men passed a resolution to have them put under Government inspection.

886. Is the work very dangerous ?—Sometimes it is very dangerous.

887. Are accidents frequent ?—There are very high faces of stone and sometimes very high faces of dirt and stone on the top, and men may

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

be working down on the bench and there has been stone hanging up many feet above them so as not to be particularly safe, and if a Government inspector were going round he would order the men to be removed or the stone to be removed, so as to protect the men's lives.

888. You heard what Mr. Wilson said with regard to the Employers' Liability Act and its amendment, do you agree with his evidence on that subject?—Yes; we have long since differed from the present Act. We think that contracting out should not be allowed. I happen to know that a great deal of pressure has been put upon men and that the men were not able to withstand it, and that they had practically been compelled to sign out as Mr. Wilson stated. I know the Miners' National Association, which the Cleveland miners belong to, once sent the late Mr. Crawford and I think Mr. Pickard down into Lancashire and about there, and they described that there were about 60,000 men that had been practically compelled to sign out. We think for that reason the permissive clause should be taken out.

889. You are not referring to Cleveland when you say pressure has been brought to bear upon the workmen?—There has never been a case in Cleveland during the whole time since the Employers' Liability Act was passed in 1881. There is only one case that we compromised at all, and I believe the manager paid it out of his own pocket. That was 5*l*. There has never been a case in court. Had there been cases where we had reason to believe that there was bad management or defective machinery, we should certainly have taken them into court. I have in my mind's eye two or three cases which we thought would have been good cases to bring, but the men were non-Union men, so we did not take them up.

Mr. *Trow*.

890. With regard to this introduction of machinery, there are 12 men employed?—Generally; it varies a little I think.

891. The 12 men receive 60*s*., that is two men receive 10*s*. and 10 men receive 4*s*. about?—I could not say exactly.

892. I think that is what you stated?—Yes; I could not say exactly, because some of those men can make 5*s*. They have to do a lot of work for it, and some do not make above 3*s*. perhaps.

893. What may I take the average at?—I think you might say 4*s*. or 4*s*. 6*d*.

894. Your complaint is that the 60*s*. should have been in the first instance divided equally among the 12 men, or that a lesser number of members should be discharged and should have the surplus that is paid to those two leading men?—Yes; my contention is, that on the introduction of the machinery, the whole gang should be selected, the men should have selected their own mates to either drill, charge, or do any part of the work, and it should all have been divided alike.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

895. That is what you would have done if it had been your Society?—That is my contention.

896. What was the cause of the last strike you had?—The cause of the strike in 1874 was that the iron trade was slowly going backward, the prices were going down, and the owners asked for a reduction of 20 per cent. We could not see our way clear to agree to it. Neither would we arbitrate. We were out six weeks, and then we went in at the reduction.

897. Is there any clause in your rules that compels your members to accept arbitration?—The rule is, if it be accepted with justice to all parties. It is the 56th rule. It provides that courts of conciliation and arbitration be acknowledged by the Association, in recommending the settlement of all disputes where they can be adopted with justice to all parties concerned.

898. Your men are strongly in favour of conciliation?—Yes.

899. How is your conciliation board, or the Joint Committee members, so far as your side are concerned, elected?—The permanent officials of the Association always stand, and, in addition to them they have four active working members; and they are nominated by the lodges, and then their names are put out on an agenda paper. The agenda paper is sent out to every branch and returned again to the council, and then, when the delegates meet in council once every three months they elect them: the men who get the highest votes are elected on the committee.

900. Your members are elected on the broadest principle, that is, the men receiving the largest number of the votes of the lodges are elected: but what is their power if they are elected on that basis?—They have to carry out as far as possible the rules and resolutions and proposals sent in by the members generally.

901. But they have no power to come to a settlement other than in accordance with the instructions received from the lodges without remitting the question back to the lodges and getting power?—That is so, on general questions.

902. You are in favour of conciliation, and so are your men?—Yes.

903. If your Joint Committee or conciliation board discusses a question and fails to agree, and goes back to your constituents, and your constituents refuse to grant you any further power, and send you back under exactly similar conditions, and the employers meet you as stiff as yourselves, where is your conciliation then: how are you going to get out of it?—Are you speaking of local cases?

904. No, general cases?—The lodges sometimes give the executive power to deal with the questions as best they can.

905. But when they do not give them power?—When they do not give them power they have to go and carry out the instructions sent in by the lodges, and if the employers do not agree they have to go back to the lodges again and give the employers' answer, and explain to them the whole position of things; and they invariably alter their decision and put it in a form so

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

that a settlement can be arrived at. In fact they have done so for the last two years.

906. Conciliation means both sides agreeing to bear and forbear; but when there is a stiffness on both sides I want to know what becomes of your conciliation, and how you are going to get out of it without arbitration?—Unless the men have distinct powers given to them they cannot settle it if the majority of the votes are against it.

907. Then your conciliation fails, and a strike must ensue?—It never has as yet.

908. But arbitration must be blended with conciliation, because, when there is a dead-lock, you must submit to somebody outside?—No doubt there is something in that, but the conciliation principle has not failed for the last two years.

909. You have submitted to arbitration several times?—Yes, prior to 1879.

910. You yourself said that one of the employers told you that the umpire in one case gave more than they expected. Can you tell us in how many cases the umpires have given more to the workmen than the employers expected them to give?—I could not.

911. In how many cases have the umpires given more either than the employers offered to give or than the employers expected the umpire to give?—I was going to say I think it would be only right for me at this stage to state this. I do not think the men have their dislike to an umpire so much on the case I incidentally mentioned, where somebody on the owner's part had told me they did not expect quite so much, as they do more particularly on an award given by Sir Fitz-James Stephen. He had the whole thing put before him, and no doubt he did the best according to the dictates of his conscience. But in summing up he said there were two evils, and he thought he would choose the lesser one by making the reduction. The men think the evidence would have warranted him in making no reduction, but he took the condition and position of the trade, and took the whole thing into consideration. He thought in his mind that it would be a greater injustice not to take it off; and he took the lesser evil. The men think if he had let the evidence rule him that was put before him, he would not have granted any reduction. That one settlement did more harm to the arbitration question in regard to general matters than any other thing that I know of.

912. You say the sliding scale is preferable if you can secure a good basis, but that it does not move quick enough; do not you think yourself it is possible to secure a good basis?—I do not think it is.

913. When does it not move quickly, when prices are going up, or coming, down?—When they are going up.

914. Are you aware that they have a sliding scale on the west coast with the blast furnacemen?—They have in Cleveland with the blast furnace men.

915. Are you aware that they have one on the west coast?—I am not.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

916. Are you not aware that they have one, and that it moves quick enough; that they have a return of the quoted price at Glasgow each market day, and that nothing can move quicker than that. In the Cleveland scale you take the ascertained price?—Yes.

917. On the west coast they take the paper price?—Yes.

918. Therefore the changes are with the paper price; now, would it not be possible for you to have a satisfactory scale based upon the paper price instead of the ascertained price, and moving with the market instead of with the returns of the accountants?—I am not in a position to ask questions, but if the Chairman will allow me to ask a question I would say: Do you mean every week?

919. No. I do not say that; say a month, or two months if you like. I want to see if you cannot get a sliding-scale basis that will be satisfactory to you?—I do not think so. In fact I am sure so.

920. No chance of it?—No.

921. And your men would not accept arbitration?—No.

922. Tell us how we are to prevent strikes in future?—We must keep our men educated up to the state of things, and go frequently before them, and keep them well posted up, and then fight the question out over the table, and when we find we cannot get any further—that the owners cannot possibly give any more, and we see it is not possible to get it, we must settle it.

923. The weakest will go to the wall. You stated that the sliding scale was the means of causing your Association to lose a number of members?—Yes. If the Chairman would allow me I would like to make a remark, since Mr. Trow speaks about the weakest going to the wall. The mine owners have been in the same position. They have positively asserted that they could not give more, and we have stuck hard and fast, and we have seen it, where, rather than they would plunge the district in a strike, they have given us a small concession more. It is when the points have been strained.

924. It is when the opportunity arises?—No, it is owing to a disposition on the part of each party to do fairly under the circumstance.

925. Could not you prevent the men leaving your Society under the scale?—I do not think so.

926. Our experience is that we increase our numbers considerably under it?—Our experience is that nearly one half of them leave us.

927. You are not in favour of State Boards of Conciliation at all then?—No, against it.

928. Or of State interference in any way between the men and the employers?—As far as the wages are concerned, no.

929. You referred to the appointment of sub-inspectors?—Yes.

930. Is not that a very sore point in connexion with miners generally?—Yes.

931. Is not the contention that many of the men who fail to pass the examination are, owing to their practical knowledge, better able to act

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

as sub-inspectors than a number of those who do pass their examination, but who have no practical knowledge?—Without a doubt.

932. And you only ask that the Act should be so altered that the examination should be easier, so that you get thoroughly practical men as sub-inspectors of the mine?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale.*

933. You referred to one case of hardship, which I understood to be this, that a practical man had attained a first class manager's certificate, but that he failed to obtain a sub-inspectorship?—Yes.

934. Can you state wherein the failure to obtain the sub-inspectorship lay?—It was in the spelling I think partly.

935. He had actually passed and obtained a first class manager's certificate?—He had.

Sir *John Gorst.*

936. Who prescribed the examination?—The Government.

937. The Civil Service Commissioners?—I think the Home Secretary.

938. Then the spelling is not prescribed by law, but by the judgment of the person who fixes the subjects of the examination?—It is one of the points to be examined upon. I suppose he could not come up to the standard for spelling.

939. Would the evil not be remedied if more stress were laid upon practical knowledge of mining and less upon spelling?—It would be a great deal better.

940. Do you think it is possible for a man to be a good practical miner who cannot spell?—I do. I should like to show the inconsistency of the law in regard to this. It prescribes that men shall be allowed to appoint two men on their behalf to inspect the mine every month if they think fit. It does not matter how bad spellers they may be if the men appoint them. There has to be a book provided for these men to write down a statement of what they find in the mine that they are inspecting, and if they find anything wrong, if they find a district badly ventilated, if they find the roof not properly timbered or anything wrong, it is put there, and notice has to be sent to the inspector if there is anything wrong. The inspector on those men's report would compel the manager to rectify these grievances—to put the matter right. But, on the other hand, you see it does not matter how practical a man may be, and he may be fairly educated too; if there is some little point that he cannot perhaps exactly answer he cannot be appointed. This, I think, shows the inconsistency of the law.

Mr. *Abraham.*

941. I think we may take it that you after all are in favour of the principle of the sliding scale if the difficulties you name could be surmounted?—Yes.

942. One of those difficulties is that the scale prices are not sensitive enough to allow the rising wages to follow the price of the material

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

quick enough?—That is one of the reasons. But I will be honest and tell you that, I should think, if that were the only reason, it might be rectified by the executive of the miners and the mine owners meeting together.

943. What were the periods of time and the intervals in prices that regulated the advances in wages under your scale?—The prices of No. 3 pig-iron ascertained from the owners' books for three months.

944. But what amount of advance would have to take place in the price of iron in order to move the wages?—I should think that our scale would be put on the smallest point of any scale in existence. No. 3 pig-iron increasing in price by ·96 would give ·001*d.* per ton to the miners getting stone.

945. If so worked out?—It is worked out to that.

946. What interval between each periodical investigation?—Three months.

947. And that would operate as a brake in preventing the wages coming down in a falling market, and to prevent the wages going up in a rising market?—Yes.

948. And in your opinion you think that it ought to be smaller still; would 12 months meet your views?—So far as that point is concerned my own opinion would be to let it regulate itself every month.

949. And that is possible?—I think it is possible.

950. Then with this efficient conciliation board, which enabled you to avoid strikes for two years, would not that also be able to form a fair basis for a scale?—I do not think it would. From the knowledge that I have from frequent meetings of the mine owners during the last six months, I do not think we should be able to get it put on a proper basis that would be satisfactory to the men.

951. Still you agree upon what rate of wages should be paid now?—Yes; it is a question now of getting the best terms we can.

952. I am asking your opinion as to the scheme. Supposing you could surmount that difficulty of arranging a fair and proper basis, which would give the greatest stability to the trade of the district, a sliding scale so based and regulated, or the meeting of every case as it arises with a conciliation board?—I should think a sliding scale.

953. That is your opinion?—That is my opinion.

954. I think you said that there was a system of fines when workmen were found to fill into the tubs something other than the mineral contracted to be gotten?—Yes, that is so.

955. Will you kindly explain that system to the Commission, and how far it is possible under that system to fine the men?—The general rule is, I think, if men send out about half cwt. to a cwt. of shale or sulphur they would be fined 6*d.*

956. Will you kindly give us the scheme as closely as you can?—That system is in operation at some of the mines. At one or two others

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

there is a deduction of weight. So if a man sent out a cwt. of stuff that was not mineral contracted to be gotten he would lose 9 cwt. of mineral contracted to be gotten. It would mean a fine of about 5*d.*, taking money value.

957. Who are the parties to that arrangement?—In some cases the check-weigher and some person on the part of the employers.

958. The check-weigher on behalf of the men in that case would be the arbitrator; seeing that the scheme would be carried out?—His attention is generally called to see the amount of stuff that is sent out. I do not know that he decides the fine, but there is a fine put on, and very likely if there is any question asked about it he says, I was called and I saw the stuff; you sent it up; and the thing goes on.

959. He helps to decide the quantity of the mineral that was not contracted to be gotten?—That is so.

960. But who are the parties to the arrangement as to the amount of the fines to be paid?—The manager, I think, as a rule puts that on.

961. Himself?—Yes.

962. Then would not that be a breach of the Mines Act?—There is no doubt it would.

963. And does your Union allow that to take place?—We allow small fines to take place. I think, if you will remember, I stated that we allowed the small fines to take place with a view to checking the men from sending out this sulphur and material which we found was injuring the trade, and we thought it was better to allow a small fine than it was to stick hard and fast to the Mines Act and not to have any money fines at all.

964. Is it not possible under the Mines Act to make quite as efficient a scheme to meet that end as the one you have?—The Mines Act provides for deduction to be made in the weight, and it is possible for an agreement to be come to to make deductions for all the weight that is sent out, and not to take any money off at all. But it is only another way of doing it. If you take half a ton off a man you might just as well take the price of half a ton.

965. But I understand that you are an advocate of amending the Mines Act, are you not?—As a rule we try to carry it out.

966. You are an advocate of amending it and improving the present Mines Act?—In regard to the fining we have not sought to improve it.

967. You seek to improve it in other directions?—Yes.

968. And still you tell the Commission that you do not avail yourself of the powers you have?—We have not done, because we have found if we stuck hard and fast to it it would not work, and I believe myself that the men and the employers can tell very often better than some of our legislators can.

969. I think you have answered Yes to the question; but I will put it again. Is it not possible under the present Mines Act to make quite as efficient a scheme to prevent the filling with that which was not the mineral contracted

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

to be gotten as the one you have?—I daresay it is.

970. Then it is not a question of legislators interfering at all, but of arrangements between employers and workmen under the Act?—Yes.

971. And you say you admit you do not do it?—Let me say that if there is an excessive fine put on, then we take it up to the Joint Committee, and we sometimes get it returned, or some portion of it.

Mr. *Dale.*

972. Has there been a case for regulating the amount of fines in respect of impurities, filled into a tub, which was sent to arbitration, with the result that the award embodied a scheme which was deemed to be in accordance with the Mines Regulation Act?—Yes, of quite recent date. The case was, if you will allow me to explain, sent to the Joint Committee. The referees referred it to an umpire, and the umpire decided as to how much deduction should be made according to the amount of refuse sent out, and I may say that his decision was about 7*d.* in the shilling better for the men than what they had been working under before.

Mr. *Abraham.*

973. Then to come back to the point, is it the manager in some instances that makes the fine?—In a good many instances the manager makes the fine; but all the works have rules, and they distinctly state on the back that any workmen sending out sulphur, shale, freestone (it is, however, very rare that there is any freestone among the ironstone) shall be fined 6*d.* for a wagonette. If he still continues to send out more, they have power to increase the fine.

974. Is that the regulation referred to by the Chairman decided by the umpire?—No; it is on the work's rules.

975. Then are we to understand that it is a condition of employment in some portion of the Cleveland mines that these fines are to take place?—The men commence to work at the mine, and they work under the system that is prevailing there; and in all cases if there is an excessive fine and the men grumble about it, it is taken to the Joint Committee.

976. I understand that at present there are some mines in Cleveland that have conditions as to fines which are not in accordance with the provisions of the Mines Act?—Yes.

977. I think you referred to a number of accidents that happened in the Cleveland mines?—Yes.

978. Will you kindly inform us what class of men among miners are most liable to these accidents?—I could not exactly make any difference in them, but as a rule the men of course that are working right up in the face happen with the most accidents.

979. What are the chief causes of the accidents?—Generally fall of the roof or fall from the side, or in case of barring.

980. Would an unpractical man be more liable to these kinds of accidents than a thoroughly competent and practical man would be?—He would

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

981. Have you as a Union any plan by which you try to prevent the employment of unskilled men at the face of these mines?—No further than watching the managers; keeping them up to the provisions in the Mines Act. The last Mines Act distinctly states, I believe, that a man shall not take charge of a place until he has worked two years with some practical person, or about the face, and if it came to our knowledge that it was violated we should at once take steps to have it rectified. As a rule, we advocate in our Union for skilled men to work together. We do not believe in a hag principle; we try to avoid that all we possibly can.

982. Seeing that competency and practice is so necessary to preserve life in that part of the country, have you as a practical miner any improvement that you can suggest in the Mines Act to meet the case?—I could not say that I have. If I speak honestly, although we have a large number of accidents, I believe there is all the care taken than can be, both on the part of the employers and the men, as a rule, to protect life. I have had some employers ask me if I could propound any scheme to try to prevent them, and I failed to do so, further than keeping the mine well ventilated and well timbered, and trying to keep incompetent men from taking charge, and that sort of thing.

983. Then it is your candid opinion that a large majority of these accidents are inevitable?—I believe they are.

984. I believe you mentioned working a second shift?—Yes.

985. What kind of work would be done on the second shift?—Precisely the same as is done on the first.

986. Only that the same number of men are not employed?—There are not so many mines that are working the double shift. Where they follow in, our men, as a rule, work in pairs. Two go in at 6 o'clock in the morning, and where it is necessary to work a double shift this other shift goes in at 2 o'clock.

987. Have you a third shift?—I think in one mine, and one mine only.

988. In the mines working two shifts when would the repairing of the mines be done?—It is done while the work is going on.

989. Day work?—The deputies come in at any part of the shift that they are required to put timber in, and they do the work.

990. So that the timbering and hewing go on together?—Yes.

991. With regard to lights, seeing that there is such a number of accidents happen, I would ask you what is the mode of lighting?—Naked light—candles.

992. Have you any electric light used at all?—None in the face. Perhaps I had better put myself right by saying that in one or two instances where gas has been discovered, in accordance with the Mines Act, safety lamps must be used for a certain time, and they have been used, but only in rare cases do they use the safety lamps.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

993. Do as many accidents occur with naked lights as when safety lamps are used?—I think there are equally as many with naked lights as there were with safety lamps. As a rule when the safety lamps were used there were very few accidents.

994. As far as accidents go then, you do not think that the naked light is any advantage?—They have not done any good in that respect. Probably with the use of lamps they may have worked a bit steadier and been a bit more careful. I would not like to say; we have no statistics to show which are the more dangerous.

995. Have you any improvement to suggest in regard to lighting these mines?—No. I do not think they could be lighted any different to what they are.

996. You said that you had now 10 per cent. on the standard wages?—Yes.

997. What standard?—1879 standard.

998. And what were the highest amounts of advances that were received upon that standard?—30 per cent. since we finished the scale.

999. Am I to understand that 30 per cent. advance is the highest point you have reached above standard?—Since we abolished the sliding scale two years ago, 30 per cent. on the standard of 1879 is the highest point we have reached. We have lost 20 of it.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

1000. You were speaking about the sliding scale a little while ago, and you said that you thought it was not sufficiently sensitive, but did I gather by that you meant it was not quick enough in its operations?—Yes.

1001. I suppose that is so, both in going up and coming down?—Yes.

1002. I think I understand from you that at present you arrange wages by conciliation?—Yes.

1003. I presume that, when the price of iron goes down, there probably is a requirement for a reduction in ironstone wages, and the other way about?—We arrange it on the same principle.

1004. Then, although you have not nominally a basis, practically are you not very near one?—We have had to work pretty much, I suppose on the rates of wages in the past.

1005. You do not find a difficulty now that you cannot overcome by conciliation?—The only other difficulty is what I pointed out, that we lose our members with the sliding scale.

1006. You mentioned that you had a strike for six weeks in 1874; I did not quite gather what the result of the strike was?—The strike took place owing to the owners seeking a reduction of wages, I suppose under the altered condition of the iron trade, and the men, thinking that they ought not to suffer the reduction, refused. The end of it was, the owners gave them 14 days' notice, and there was a stoppage for six weeks, and they resumed work at the 20 per cent. reduction.

1007. You said a little while ago, in connexion with the Employers' Liability Act, that 60,000

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

men were forced to contract out of it in Lancashire; did you state that of your own knowledge?—I speak of it from knowledg I obtained from being a member of the Central Board of the Miners' National Union. We sent the late Mr. Crawford and Mr. Pickard into these counties to ascertain as far as possible how things were working. They discovered that practically about 60,000 men in those counties had been compelled to sign out. They brought us back a notice that had been put up on the pit head, saying that all men that worked there after a given date must pay into an insurance fund jointly with the employers, and they must look to that fund, and to that fund alone, for compensation in case of accidents.

Mr. *Burt.*

1008. Are you quite certain as to the accuracy of the figures, 60,000?—I am positive they estimated 60,000, but there probably would be more.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

1008*a*. Are you aware that prior to that time it was a condition that all the miners in Lancashire should be members and pay into the society?—I am aware that they had a permanent relief fund there, but how it was worked I do not know.

1009. Do you know whether these 60,000 men stopped work or not?—I do not think they did. I think they kept working, and worked under the conditions.

1010. I am afraid that rather shows you do not quite know the history of it. Will you take it from me that there was a strike at the time that the Employers' Liability Act came into force?—I do not think that there was any strike.

1011. There having been a stoppage of work at the time, do you know whether the men were also under a notice of reduction for 10 per cent. at the same time?—I do not. I would like to make a statement if you will allow me. We had a question raised on the Board of the Miners' National Union as to whether we should go in for removing the permissive clause from the Employers' Liability Act, and before we took any steps we wanted to be certain what we were doing.

1012. Are you speaking now of Lancashire?—I am speaking now for the whole of the miners. To be quite sure about it, we sent the late Mr. Crawford and Mr. Pickard to ascertain, and they came back and reported, and brought a notice with them, and the notice distinctly stated that men working there after a certain date would have to work under these conditions—that they must subscribe to this fund, which the owners would also subscribe to, and they must look to that fund, and to that fund alone, for compensation under the Employers' Liability Act. We said that the men had not money to shift to other parts of the county, and they were practically forced out of it.

1013. Did you hear what the arrangement was between the men and the masters in respect

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

of the Act. Do you know that the employers undertake to increase their subscriptions to the permanent relief fund by 15 per cent. in consideration of the men on their part foregoing immediate benefit under the Act?—I heard something of that.

1014. And did you hear, or do you know, that all the colliers in the West Lancashire district, and most of those about Manchester struck, although in a great many collieries no such arrangement as I have mentioned had ever been asked for or made?—I believe that is so.

1015. You were speaking about practical inspectors a while ago; would you propose that there should be no examination at all?—I certainly would not. I think there should be an examination, but that it should be of such a character that an ordinary man might pass. I think it is put far above what it ought to be now.

1016. Would you put it as high as a first-class certificate under the Mining Inspection Act?—Not for a sub-inspector.

1017. Do you know that in the examinations under the Mines Inspection Act it is essential that a man shall have had five years practical knowledge of working in mines?—Yes, I am aware of that.

1018. You spoke a while ago about labour-saving machinery; if I gathered rightly you do not object to labour-saving machinery?—Not if the men get the benefit as well as the employers.

1019. You want to have a proper arrangement as to how it shall be dealt with as regards wages?—Yes.

1020. It occurred to me that if what you call labour-saving machinery is objected to you ought to object to a hauling engine, for instance, because that saves labour, does it not?—That is more in the shape of saving horses.

1021. But there must be a boy with the horse?—Yes; but this is the view I take of it: here are the men employed, and they are used as long as they are required. Then the machinery is brought down and placed there, and the men are sent out to go where they like, either with work or without it. It is just as it happens whether they get it or not; and the machine is used in their place.

1022. That amounts then really to a primary objection to a machine for getting minerals?—I would not object to labour-saving machinery if the workman got the benefit of it as well as other people. I am one of those individuals who believe that science should benefit everybody, not the few only.

1023. I suppose you would deny that a great deal more labour is used owing to the introduction of machinery during the last 50 years than there would have been if none had been introduced?—There is no doubt.

1024. I think you have said that there were no free houses in connexion with the Cleveland mines?—None.

Sir *E. Harland.*

1025. Referring to the question of the sliding scale, and to the partial answer to the question

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

you have given, I understood your objection to it was that it was too slow in its action. I presume you meant too slow in its action on a rising market?—That is one reason.

1026. I will pursue that reason before going into others. On an average, about how soon after a rise in the market upon the material sold has taken place does the rise in wages occur?—The employers make their contracts; they have told us, on an average, for about four months, and therefore it would be pretty nearly four months before it could happen.

1027. But in practice how soon after the rise has the increase in wages taken place?—Of course there are always a few current contracts, and there may be a small rise the next adjustment; but it is so far below what the market prices have attained to that there is where the dissatisfaction comes.

1028. You are not able to mention how soon after a rise you have known an advantageous effect on the wages occur?—It could not happen under three months.

1029. Never under three months?—Never under three months.

1030. What is the extreme time you have known elapse before the rise occurred in the wages?—I do not know in a rising market, but it has responded partly in the three months.

1031. Shall we take three months as about the average time in which the rise in the wages is brought to correspond with the value of the material sold?—I do not know whether that would be a fair time to take it. I should scarcely like to say.

1032. Suppose the prices of the pig-iron, which is your basis, fall, how soon after that are you called upon to be satisfied with a reduction in wages?—I have known it when it has gone about three months.

1033. You mean that is in the falling market?—Yes, the prices have been kept up.

1034. Then does one not balance the other?—They do not.

1035 But the average in the one case, in the rising market, is three months, and, as I make out, the fall would be about three months?—I shall have to give you some explanation. We have asked the mine owners this question, and they told us, which I daresay you, as practical gentlemen, know, that there is not so much stuff bought and sold at the high prices as there is at the low, and we have had it illustrated to us by a very ingenious owner with a water-bottle. These water-bottles are hardly the shape, because they are no larger at the bottom than here; but he illustrated it with a bottle with a wide bottom and a small top; and he said the bulk of the trade is done at the base and not at the top, and that is why it does not hold the price up so long in a falling market as it ought to do.

1036. I presume you will admit that in all probability if you were to examine the books of the manufacturer you would find that he had booked orders perhaps as far forward in the top of the market as he had at the bottom of the market?—I do not think so.

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

1037. Then which do you think he has to book orders for the furthest forward, when the prices are high or when the prices are low?—I should say when it was between the two; but I could not say, not seeing their books. The chartered accountants who have acted on our behalf are not allowed to tell us, because they are sworn to secrecy and properly too I think. I do not think it would be right for them to go and tell everybody what any firm have got for their iron, so long as they certify the correct price, which I believe they have always had the opportunity of doing. That is all that we can get to know.

Mr. *Dale.*

1038. With reference to the inquiries Sir Edward Harland is making, they might be illustrated and answered if, when the employers' representatives are called they were asked to put in a statement for a series of years comparing the quoted price of No. 3 Cleveland pig-iron with the ascertained invoice price. That would show how quickly the actual invoice responded to the increase in the market rate?—I can, of course, only give you my opinion of how to the best of knowledge it has worked but of course we cannot possibly have the statistics.

1039. They would actually be certified by the accountants of the employed, and as regards the quoted price would be agreed, I have no doubt, between you and the owners' secretary?—I would like to make a remark with your permission to put this clearly, and to show that we have reason to believe that there has not been—in fact we know there has not been—so much stuff sold at the higher prices sometimes; but the iron trade is a fluctuating trade, and I know on one occasion where the firm made a contract they could not take the stuff. They said if we do take it we cannot pay, and they paid 400*l.* to break the contract. The 400*l.* was thrown into the ascertainment though to swell the price.

Sir *E. Harland.*

1040. My sole object in putting the question was to ascertain from you whether there was not another side to the case—the falling side as well as the rising side?—Yes.

1041. And I gather from you, so far as you have been able to ascertain, although you cannot say it precisely occurred on the falling side, there is a considerable advantage to the workmen on a falling market to somewhat balance the rise on a higher market?—That is the advantage to the workmen.

1042. You expressed the view that labour-saving machinery had some advantages, but your objection would appear to be that the workmen did not derive an equal benefit or that benefit which they might reasonably expect?—Yes.

1043. With regard to wages, what are the wages of the present day about?—We have not quite correct figures, but I should imagine the miners' wages would be about 5*s.* 2*d.* a day.

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

1044. What were they 30 or 40 years ago?—They varied.

1045. What were they about then—were they as high?—I have worked in the mines myself, and I think I can carry my mind back to making about 4*s.* 6*d.*; but we were working long hours.

1046. And I should judge you would be one of the hard-working ones too?—I daresay I worked rather harder than I ought to have done.

1047. Then it would appear that there has been at any rate a considerable rise in wages?—I do not think there has. If you will allow me to explain I would say I believe the men are making probably a little higher average than some of them did then; some men did well then but they worked longer hours, four hours a day longer. But still they are doing more work now than in the longer hours. There is more stone sent out from the shaft now than was sent out in 12 hours. That is very strong, but it is so.

1048. Would the introduction of machinery account for that?—I am keeping the machinery out in my observation.

1049. Are there any iron mines at present where machinery is not used?—Yes; there are only about four or five mines out of the 23 mines where machines are used.

1050. Then going back some 30 or 40 years, and taking the case of a leasehold mine (and a royalty being perhaps paid to the proprietors of the stone) was the royalty per ton then paid the same as it is at present, or has the royalty been increased?—From information that I have got now and again I think it has been increased. I think that royalty owners, who had not made a very good bargain, got more for their royalties when they made a fresh contract.

1051. Are you aware that the pig-iron of to-day, or within the last year, is very much lower in price than it was 30 or 40 years ago?—Yes. I have an idea it is lower than it was 30 or 40 years ago.

1052. Then if wages were lower then and royalties were lower then, and prices were higher, could you in any way blame the owner, for introducing, of necessity, machinery for reducing the cost of the stone in order to enable him to meet the present very much lower price of the pig-iron?—I cannot blame an employer for getting the work done as cheap as he can.

1053. But do you not see that he has been obliged to reduce the cost of production to meet the falling price in the market?—Yes, I have no doubt he has.

1054. So that perhaps, although it may appear to you to be a hard thing to introduce labour-saving machinery, and so perhaps throw out for a time a certain number of hands where that machinery is used, still do you not see that something must be reduced somewhere in order to pay higher wages and yet produce a certain article in the shape of pig-iron at a less price?—There is wanted some explanation here, there are one or two things you do not seem to see. I believe that in the last 30 or 40 years very great improvements have been made in the furnaces. I believe now that furnaces, some of them, turn out twice as much stuff as they did 30 or 40 years ago, and I believe a great deal has been done in the way of making iron cheaper. That is my opinion; only of course I cannot tell you from statistics because I am on the workmen's side. We should be only too glad if we did know. But still, at the same time, I can quite agree that something should be done. No doubt the employer wants to do it as cheap as he can. But you must see from our position and from our standpoint too. The population is increasing yearly by 400,000 to 500,000, and if labour-saving machinery is brought in to cut out the hand labour, what are we going to do with the people.

1055. Do you anticipate that your trade will form an exception to every other trade which has yet been pursued in this country, where it has been found that more machinery being employed has resulted in more hands being employed also?—I do not clearly understand you.

1056. You refer to only a very few mines using these machines?—Yes.

1057. And naturally one might conclude that where the machines are used in so few instances it might have thrown men out of employment; but will not the time arrive when most of the mines will have these machines?—I do not think so.

1058. Will not very many more mines be set to work in consequence of the advantages derived from those machines?—I do not think there will be more mines set to work. The machines will increase a little but not so very much, because a large number of them are working what we call brokens or pillar working, and the machines are not so handy in the brokens, and it is scarcely safe for some of them. In fact they could not get them in in some of the mines.

1059. As you were taking pig-iron as the basis for your sliding scale of course I was obliged to refer to it in this instance; but can you give a comparison of the prices of the iron stone as it leaves the mine now with what they were 20 or 30 years ago?—I could not.

1060. Perhaps it may be that the mines are very much in the hands of the iron-masters, is that it?—It depends a very great deal, I think, on the price of the pig-iron as to what the stone is sold at.

1061. Do you think the stone has gone up or down in price?—I think it has gone up this last year or two.

1062. But within the last 20 or 30 years what do you say?—I would not like to say.

1063. Your society was originally what might be termed a friendly society, was it not?—No, it was not started as a friendly society. We had a sick club attached to it at one time; but still it is a Trades Union.

1064. It has been that from its origin?—Yes.

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

1065. How many years is that since?—I believe it was established in January 1872.

1066. You used the expression once or twice that by a certain arrangement you would lose your members; will you please explain what that means?—That is by signing the sliding scale for two years. You see we are living in an age now when, unless there is something on the board for men to take an interest in, they get into a sort of a state of lethargy. Then there is another thing to make them not care about it. We find if there is nothing on the board, and the thing is settled for two years, the men keep away from the lodge rooms, and they eventually drift away altogether. They do not pay their contributions. They seem to take no notice. But if you have to settle wages once in three months, then there is something for them to take an interest in, and they do not give up their membership.

1067. I presume from that, that it is your principle to get up a little excitement now and then from motives of policy?—No, we have no revival meetings except when there is a necessity for them.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

1068. You told us that although the hours had been very materially reduced within the last 18 years, nevertheless the output has been, if anything, increased?—Yes.

1069. I understand you to mean by that, the output per man?—Yes.

1070. Do you think that process can be carried further—if you were to still further reduce the hours, would you get an output equal to or greater than the present?—No, it could not be done indeed.

1071. Do you think you have reached about the limit?—There are certain reasons why that cannot happen.

1072. If you reduced the hours would the output be reduced too?—The output would be reduced, I think. I could give you the reason in about a moment. In working the long hours the men would have sometimes to throw the stone back from the face to fill four or five waggons at a time, and of course it took a long time to do that. After the hours were reduced, the owners had to adapt their works to the altered circumstances, they put on more horses and more waggons, and that sort of thing, in order to get the work away, and instead of a man having to throw his stone back for four or five waggons at a time, he is very often now supplied with only one or two, and consequently he does not have the same amount of labour to perform. He works very much harder, I quite agree with that, than he used to do. His working time in the face is seven hours, and he can certainly work better, brisker, and freer in the seven hours than he could before. I might say, if you will allow me, that we have worked on this principle now for some time, and we have never been asked for 16 years at any rate to go back to the long hours. In the very worst times we have never been asked, and if we had been we should not do it.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

Mr. *Fowler.*

1073. What is your maximum number of hours?—Eight from bank to bank.

1074. Is that universal in the Cleveland district?—Yes.

1075. What does that mean down the pit?—Seven hours in the face.

1076. Seven in the pit at the face, and the other hour represents what?—Half-an-hour going out and half-an-hour coming in.

1077. And is that satisfactory both to the men and the masters?—I believe it is.

1078. Do you think there is as great an output now as there was when the hours were longer?—There is a larger output.

1079. A larger output arising from the number of men?—Per man.

1080. That is, you think a man does more work and better work in the short time than he did in the nine or ten hours?—He does.

1081. There is less exhaustion and more energy in his work?—He works harder and freer than he did then, of course.

1082. How are those hours in Cleveland compared with the hours in Durham?—A little longer; probably about an hour a day; not longer.

1083. And in Northumberland?—Half-an-hour longer. I believe Northumberland is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours; some of their men work that, I think.

1084. What are your hours as compared with Lancashire?—As far as I can understand, there are some of them working 10 or 11 hours in Lancashire.

1085. Do you know anything about Staffordshire?—No.

1086. Your Union does not extend to that district?—We do not extend to those counties; only we have heard something of them from delegates.

1087. Then you feel the present position of the law under the Employers' Liability Act to be a positive grievance to the men?—Our men have never called it in question, but we go on the general principle, and we think that if united capital can be brought to bear upon men and put some pressure upon them it should not be allowed. As a rule we think that adults can regulate these things themselves, but if there is a united capital brought to bear upon them, then we most certainly say that the law ought to step in and stop it.

1088. There is no compulsion in the Cleveland district is there to contract out?—No; and we have never been asked.

1089. Nor in Durham?—They have never been asked.

1090. Is it only in other parts of the kingdom?—It is only in other parts, I believe; one of our employers told me that they should never ask us. He said they would prefer to leave the thing open and let the men take a case if they had one.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

1091. Referring to the two shifts, are there two shifts all round or two shifts of drillers and fillers?—In the case of the two shifts where the men are hand-drill miners they go in pairs; there is a pair works from 6 to 2; another pair goes in from 2 to 10. It requires a full staff to each shift, just the same where they work double shifts.

1092. Do the drivers go in pairs, some from 6 to 2, and others from 2 to 10?—Yes.

1093. What about the winders, haulers, and the general body of men, the banksmen as well as those others—is there a double shift?—There are two shifts at some pits; it depends as to the amount of men who are engaged if they have not plenty of waggons to get their work out; there are two shifts of enginemen employed, if they have a good stock of waggons they probably have only one.

1094. In that case it is overtime for those men?—There is an arrangement made.

1095. Is that common?—No, I think not. I think, as a rule, where there are two shifts, there are two shifts of enginemen.

1096. And two shifts of men all round, and boys?—No, not two shifts of tippers.

1097. In Durham and Northumberland there are two shifts of hewers, are there not?—Yes.

1098. But there are not two shifts of general labourers?—No; it is the same in Cleveland.

1099. The same in Cleveland?—Yes.

1100. In the case of two shifts of eight hours, running to 16, how long would the general body of men, not the drillers, work?—Do you mean the men getting the work away?

1101. Yes. I do not know what name you call them in the ironstone mines?—They are engine-plane men and bank-riders. These men, who are engaged to get the work away, work, I should think, an average of about nine hours, from six in the morning till two, or between two and four, and if they are after four they have overtime.

1102. But it must be very often that they run after four, where there are two shifts of drillers?—No, they get it run off, and there are plenty of waggons to keep the men getting stone and filling up to 10 o'clock at night—they have a good supply of waggons; perhaps 300 or 400 empty waggons are put in for those men.

1103. You mentioned that at about one-fourth of the mines the machine drills are at work?—Not quite one-fourth.

1104. About 5 out of 21 or 22. How many years have the machine drills been at work?—I could not say, but perhaps 10 or 12 years. They were in an experimental stage for a good bit.

1105. There must be a number of machines down each of those mines?—Yes, perhaps some of them have four down. They work them both shifts.

1106. And on the average there are twelve men in a shift?—I should say there would be about 12 men in a shift.

1107. And a machine will turn out about 130 tons?—They vary. I have known them from 100 up to 150—perhaps 120 or 130 would be about the fair output to take.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

1108. And a hand-drill miner turns out about six tons with it?—Yes.

1109. So that with the machine-drill twice as much work is done, since each of those machines has displaced about 10 men?—Yes.

1110. About how many did the whole of the machines erected in those five pits displace altogether?—I could not tell you exactly.

1111. Several hundreds?—There were several hundreds.

1112. What became of those men?—Some of them emigrated to America, some to Australia, and some of them migrated to different parts of the country.

1113. They had to clear out of the neighbourhood?—Yes, at the present time I should think we have about 3,000 less men in the district than we had at one time, but the general output altogether is a little less. Our output in Cleveland, I think, used to be about 6,000,000 tons, and probably it will be about 5,500,000 now, or somewhere near that.

1114. You told us you had 6,579 men?—In and about the mines.

1115. And if you have 3,000 less than formerly, you would have about only two-thirds now?—Yes. We used to have about 9,000, or above 9,000.

1116. And the output is nearly the same as formerly?—About half a million less.

1117. And all the men dislodged had to clear out of the neighbourhood and seek a living elsewhere?—Yes.

1118. Now, referring to the other 16 or 17 mines which have not yet got the machines in, I understood you to say that you did not expect that they would get them?—Some of them will get them, but not many of them, I think.

1119. Suppose half of the remaining mines get them, what will happen to another 3,000 or 4,000 men?—A lot more will have to clear out.

1120. Rather a rough look-out that. Then, again, your hand-drill miners are getting 5*s.* 2*d.* a day?—About that. I could not say definitely.

1121. And the miners following the machine drill get only about 4*s.* 6*d.*?—They are engaged by the ton, and, of course, it depends upon what they fill; but to get a good day's work, to get as much as the hand-drill miners are making, they would have to fill probably about 16 or 18 tons a day.

1122. What do they usually fill, and, therefore, what do they usually get?—They fill about 12 or 14 tons a day.

1123. What would that give them?—I do not know the price just now. I could not speak as to that.

1124. Would the man who follows a machine drill do as well as the miner with 5*s.* 2*d* a day?—No, he is not doing so well as that.

1125. He is not?—No.

1126. Then the effect of the machine is not only to cut down the number of men very seriously, but also to reduce the average wage?—There is no doubt that it reduces the wage.

1127. It has advanced the wage of the two men in charge?—Yes.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

1128. And reduced the wage of the ten men ?—Yes.

1129. And dispensed with one-third of the total men wherever it has started practically ?—Yes.

1130. I should certainly agree with you that you are not securing that which you ought to secure from the results of the introduction of the machine. Have you any reason to expect that other pits will have the machine introduced inside of a year or two ?—Some of them will, I know, because they are laying the plant down for the machines now.

1131. About how many ?—I do not know of more than one at the present time.

1132. Do you think that you will secure any advantage as the result of that ?—I do not think so.

1133. Apart from the displacement of one-third of the men now working in those pits where the machines will be introduced, will there also be a reduction of wage for the remainder on the same scale as that which has already obtained, do you suppose ?—I think it will be very much on the same scale.

1134. How do you propose as a Union to meet that difficulty, which is a very serious one ?—Well, we have not had it on the board yet.

1135. That will bring us, then, to the relationship which exists between yourselves and your employers. You have not a sliding scale arrangement. You settle your difficulties mainly by negotiation, and I presume that when those men were displaced before, you did not bring that before the joint committee or before the board of arbitration ?—No.

1136. And that if it happens again you are not likely to ?—Well, I would not like to say. It is very likely it might be, but it has not been brought before them.

1137. But you know that is one of the most serious things that can possibly happen when it comes to one man out of three being displaced. If the relationship that exists between employers and workers can be looked upon as at all satisfactory it should meet such a difficulty as that ?—I do not see very well if the machines are brought in how it can be avoided, because the men would not be wanted in the district.

1138. Quite so. Now we will deal with the wage taken, say, at 5*s.* or 5*s.* 2*d.* a day. Is that for six days a week ?—No, I believe our men will work about five days a week.

1139. About five days a week ?—I do not think, taking them altogether (you will get these statistics from the owners' side), that they average more than five days a week.

1140. That is 25*s.* a week, practically ?—Yes, or just a little over it, probably.

1141. And out of that, has he to pay for gunpowder, that is to say, blasting powder and candles ?—No, not out of that.

1142. Not out of that ?—No, nor yet for candles. Candles and powder are taken off before that—the 5*s.* 2*d.* is net.

1143. About the wage of the boys ?—The wage of the boys varies. A trapper boy gets, I think, 1*s.* to start with, and the per-centage which

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

is on the standard rate, and they vary this right up to 2*s.* 10*d.* and 3*s.*

1144. Then they are gradually drafted in to supply the men's places ?—Yes.

1145. Respecting some of the answers that you gave as to the effects of the sliding scale on the Union, supposing that a satisfactory sliding scale could be decided upon which would properly regulate the rates of wages in a manner satisfactory to the employers and workers, would that dispense with the necessity for a Union ?—I do not think so.

1146. Supposing it did dispense with the difficulties which the Union now copes with there is no further necessity for a Union then, is there ?—I do not think you can ever dispense with a Union.

1147. We will not trouble about that for the moment. May we put it like this, because you certainly, according to my thinking, in reply to some of the questions addressed to you by Sir Edward Harland would lead one to think that you would keep away the sliding scale for the express purpose of finding the Union something to do, and that practically there would be nothing for the Union to do if it were not for the regulation of the wages. You will say, I presume, will you not, that it is very desirable to have the wages so fixed that the necessity for even discussing the wages shall crop up as rarely as possible; that is desirable, is it not ?—Well, without there are some altered conditions. If you can get them put on a proper base-rate to commence with, and there is no altered condition, you would not need to discuss them very often, but I do not think it is possible to dispense with the Union.

1148. For what reason ?—I think if we were to dispense with the Union the thing would very soon go wrong, because I do not believe that a thing can be properly carried on unless both sides are well organised, and keep one another to the point.

1149. Yes, but for what reason; if wages can be regulated by a sliding scale then why should not you dispense with the Union ?—Because you see you have no recognised head to deal with. The employers would have to deal with the men as a tag-rag and bob-tail lot without any head.

1150. What do you presume would happen ?—I think everything would be wrong, and probably they would lose what they might have gained through their efforts in the Union. In fact I am certain they would.

1151. Exactly; that is what I wanted to draw out, because if it were given forth that the Union would rather disfavour sliding scales because there was a chance of the sliding scales fixing the wages properly and dispensing with the necessity for the Union, that would be rather a poor look-out for the Union ?—Certainly.

1152. The real object, as I understand, is that you keep well organised in order that a sliding scale or any other such matter may be settled on a satisfactory basis to all parties ?—I do not think you can settle satisfactorily without a Union, because if the employers know that there is only half the men organised you cannot get

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

the same terms from them—it is impossible that you could do so—as if they were all in.

Mr. *Trow.*

1153. The sliding scale only governs the general wages?—That is all.

1154. Are there not in your district every week or nearly so local difficulties cropping up? —Yes.

1155. Then are not the Union and your joint committee absolutely necessary to deal with these local difficulties?—Certainly.

1156. Just the same when there is a scale as without it?—Certainly.

1157. Then where is the necessity for your Union theory when these difficulties are cropping up every week if you had a scale and you had to deal with it?—You could not dispense with the Union.

Lord *Hartington.*

1158. Is it your opinion, generally speaking, that your wages are maintained at a fair rate considering the selling price of iron and the cost in other respects of its production?—We scarcely think they are, but still we know very well that the iron trade is not in a very good state just now.

1159. There may be slight differences of opinion between you and the masters, but you do not think the masters could afford to pay you much higher wages than they do now?—I do not think they could a very great deal more.

1160. Any difference you think would be upon a question of detail, you do not think they could afford to pay you very much more?—I think they might afford to pay us a little more.

1161. But not very much?—To put it plainly I do not think they could afford to pay us as much as the colliers are paid on the base-rate of 1879. Most of them have 40 per cent., but we have only 10. I think if our owners were to give us 40 per cent. at the present time——in fact they could not do it.

1162. Then do I understand that you do not consider that your wages are in any degree unfairly reduced by the competition of other labour-seeking employment?—I think our calling is rather different to others in this respect: The competition in regard to out-door labour does not make such a very great deal of difference to us because the men could not do our work if they were brought to it, they must be trained for it.

1163. Your men are, to a certain extent, skilled workers?—Yes.

1164. Could coal-miners take up your work? —They could in time, but as a rule they do not like it, there are very few stop in our district except in the case of the overmen.

1165. Very few do you say?—There are very few miners who will work in the stone. If men are sent to be overmen they will stop, but they will not stop if they have to get the stone as a rule.

Lord *Hartington*—continued.

1166. In any great depression of the coal industry, I presume, the competition of coal miners might affect your wages?—It might to a certain extent.

1167. Then, generally speaking, the number of men who are engaged in your industry accommodates itself to the work which has to be done?—Yes.

1168. You were asked something about the hours of labour, is there any agitation among your men for a further reduction of hours?—Not at present, only for some youths and the men who are getting the work away—probably about 300 or 400 in the whole district—we want to bring them to eight hours because we believe that eight hours underground is as long for health and wages purposes as any man ought to work.

1169. Would your men be in favour of any legislative regulation of the hours?—They are not at present, they are against it at present, they think the men can regulate the thing for themselves if they like—between themselves and the employers.

1170. Would you go any further than that, would they object to it?—They do object to it at present.

1171. Can you state on what grounds?—If I were to give my own opinion, I think I should cover the opinions of some of the others. First of all, male adults have the thing in their own hands. Secondly, my own opinion is that if there were a legislative enactment passed for men only to work eight hours, it would cause the unorganised men in the country not to organise if the eight hours were given to them without organising.

1172. You would rather keep the regulation of the hours of labour as well as wages in the hands of the men themselves?—I would.

Mr. *Austin.*

1173. You referred to the irregularity of the employment, what per-centage of the members of your Union are out of employment during the year?—I could not tell you, but not very many, they nearly all migrate off as soon as they find there is no chance of work—when they are discharged they migrate and emigrate.

1174. Have the drilling machines anything to do with this irregular employment?—Not more than reducing the number of men when they were introduced and cut out, say, 10 men to every machine, or something near about that. That is the only effect, I think, that the machines have upon it.

1175. Very much has been said about those drilling machines, are they expensive machines? —I believe they are. If the full expense of putting down those machines had been put to the right quarter, I do not think there would have been many of them.

1176. Where are they manufactured, are they manufactured in this country?—Yes.

1177. Has the Union taken any practical steps to put forward the views you have just enunciated about the expense of these machines?

Mr. *Austin*—continued.

1178. Have they taken that into consideration at all?—No, they have not.

1179. Not at all?—No.

1179*a*. As regards these conciliation boards, you say that both sides should be well organised. I take it from that that full latitude would be given to the representatives of your Union to organise the members in your district?—Yes.

1180. And that no hindrance would be placed by the employers in their way?—Not the least.

1181. Therefore both sides would be well organised, and if they fail as regards conciliation, what objection is there to referring the matter to arbitration?—The objection is that it takes the matter out of the hands of the practical men and puts it into an unpractical man's hands.

1182. When the practical men fail and when both sides are determined, have you any other solution to put forward besides arbitration in order to avert a strike?—I think not, if they do fail.

1183. Do you not think that a friendly intervention would have a good effect?—Well, it is a way out of the difficulty.

1184. Do you not think, if it is a way out of the difficulty, that it should be approached?—We have not arrived at it just yet. For two years we have settled by conciliation, and we have never arrived at that stage. There has been a disposition on the part of the claimants in every case yet, when they have got as far as they could, to give way and to settle it, and I hope it will always be so.

Sir *E. Harland.*

1185. Are the drilling machines pneumatic or hydraulic?—They are all worked by compressed air, but there is one where the compressor is worked by water power.

1186. I think I gathered just now that you are not able to say what is about the cost of these machines?—I believe it is betwixt 500*l.* and 600*l.*

1187. Does that include the steam engine for compressing the air?—I think it is only the machine itself.

1188. Then in addition to that there is the plant necessary for compressing the air?—Yes, there is the compressor, and the engine, and there are all the pipes to lay down all the length and into every place.

1189. I presume you would be willing to allow a fair profit to the capitalist who has put this machinery down; you would allow interest for money?—Well, I do not think we would ever ask anybody to work either with machinery or in any other way without a profit, we know that otherwise it could not stand very long.

1190. I also think that you will admit that there have been many cases of such machines being tried which have proved quite failures?—Yes; there are some cases.

1191. In those instances of course the speculator in them, that is, the proprietor, has lost the money entirely himself?—That is very likely.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. John Norman called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

1192. You are a Cleveland miner, I believe?—Yes.

1193. And you have worked for about 20 years in the mines of Cleveland?—Yes, I have worked 20 years as a miner.

1194. And you are still at work?—Yes.

1195. You have heard the evidence which has been given by Mr. Toyn?—Yes.

1196. May we take it that, in the main, you agree with the evidence which he has given?—Yes, with the whole of it, generally speaking.

1197. Are you one of the executive of the Cleveland Miners' Association?—Yes, and have been, I think, almost since its formation, according to the regulations laid down in our rules, that is to say, we have to retire for a certain period before we can be re elected.

1198. Unlike Mr. Toyn, I believe you do not give your time to the affairs of the Union as an executive officer?—No.

1199. You follow your occupation as a miner, but you are one of the miners' executive?—Yes, I am called upon casually to assist Mr. Toyn in discussing these matters with the owners.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

1200. Are you also one of the representatives of the Cleveland Miners' Association on the joint committee?—Yes.

1201. I think instead of asking you specific questions, I would rather invite you to state the points upon which you would desire to supplement the evidence given by Mr. Toyn?—One thing is in reference to the sliding scale. Mr. Toyn gave two or three reasons why the Cleveland miners objected to the scale. I prefer to supplement that by giving an additional reason why I, as a miner myself, objected to the scale, and that is the gradations when it reached a certain figure. We were paid under the existing scale, say, 10*d.* per ton on pig-iron at 40*s.*, that is to say, a penny a ton for getting ironstone for every 4*s.* up to 40*s.* When we reached that 40*s.* our gradations then were double, and I, as a miner, think that my wages ought to be regulated a little quicker in that respect, or, in other words, that the gradations which were then 1*d.* for every 8*s.* advance were too long. I do not put it into a percentage, because we generally discuss our matters in pennies, halfpennies, and farthings

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

per ton. I hope that if any member of the Commission has any question to ask me upon that he will put it in such a manner that I can understand it, namely, in halfpennies and pennies.

1202. I think the Commission will understand you to mean that, in addition to the reasons given by Mr. Toyn for objecting to the sliding scale—for hesitating, at any rate, about any re-establishment of the sliding scale—you are of opinion that the sliding scale which was last in existence did not advance wages in a sufficiently rapid proportion to the advance in the price of pig-iron?—Yes; that is in its gradations. Of course Mr. Toyn was referring to the upward tendency or downward tendency of the market. I am not referring to that in any way, I am simply referring to the gradations of the scale.

1203. In other words, a scale, to be satisfactory to you upon the particular point which you have brought before us, should advance wages more rapidly in relation to the price of pig-iron than the late scale did?—Yes, that is my opinion. Of course I also concur in what Mr. Toyn has said, as I specified to the chair at first in reference to the basis rate, in that I concur with him, but this is an additional matter.

1204. Do you object to the principle of the sliding scale?—No, personally, I do not object; as a miner I am quite willing to have my wages regulated by a scale in the event of a satisfactory scale being arrived at. Of course the old scale did not give me satisfaction as a miner.

1205. Chiefly on the ground that you have just stated?—Yes, for the reasons enumerated by Mr. Toyn and for the other additional reason I have given.

1206. On what other point would you desire to supplement Mr. Toyn's evidence?—I cannot say that there are any particular points that I would wish to say anything about.

1207. I am not putting specific questions to you because I might merely be doing that which you asked me, if possible, to induce the Commission to avoid, that is, detain you by going over the same ground, when you would give me the same answers, so I am rather putting it to yourself whether there is anything that you would like to state further to the Commission?—I do not know that there is anything in particular that I wish to add to what Mr. Toyn has stated. Really he has covered the whole of the ground. I believe, and also, I think, Mr. Strong does, that he has covered the whole of the ground which we had any chance of travelling.

Lord *Hartington*.

1208. Have you anything to say as to the hours of labour? Will you state your own view as to the hours prevailing in your district?—That is as to my own experience, if I follow you. We are now working eight hours. That is considered our time.

Lord *Hartington*—continued.

1209. You are now working eight hours?—Yes, eight hours a day, or eight hours per shift from bank to bank.

1210. Are you, and the men as far as you represent them, satisfied with those hours?—I am satisfied at present at any rate, and certainly our conditions are very materially better now than they were 20 years ago

1211. What would be your view of any legislative regulation of the hours?—I do not believe in legislation. I believe that I am qualified as a miner, if my employer will meet me, to submit my conditions to him and that we can agree matters more favourably than any other persons could legislate for me.

1212. Do you consider legislative regulation unnecessary?—I do.

1213. Would you consider it more than unnecessary, would you consider it objectionable?—I should rather consider it objectionable.

1214. Have you any opinion as to the State regulation of the hours of labour in other industries besides your own?—No, I have not. At least I have never considered the matter, I have seen that there has been an agitation in the country for an Eight Hours' Bill, but that is a matter that I have taken very little notice of.

1215. You have not considered whether it would affect you, indirectly, favourably or otherwise?—No, I have not.

Sir *John Gorst*.

1216. Do you think a man could work underground for more than eight hours a day without injury to his health?—I do not think so.

1217. Did you at one time of your life work more than eight hours underground?—Yes. I have worked as many as 14 hours. We were perfectly at liberty to work as long as we liked.

1218. Now when you worked more than eight hours a day underground did you find that you suffered in your health and strength from it?—Yes, I did suffer, and very materially too, although at that time I was younger than I am now. Still, I could not follow my usual employment so often as I can now, on account of physical strength. I am quite of opinion that eight hours in a mine is quite sufficient for any person to work, that is, having regard to his physical strength.

1219. And you think it would injure him physically to work longer than eight hours?—I not only think so, I am quite sure.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. JABEZ STRONG called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

1220. You are now, and have been for some years, a deputy in one of the mines of Cleveland ?—Yes.

1221. Previous to that period I believe you had worked as an ironstone miner for three years ?—Yes.

1222. A deputy is a deputy overman in fact ?—Yes, he is practically that.

1223. Are you a member of the executive council of the Cleveland Miners' Association ?—Yes.

1224. Are you also one of the representatives of the Cleveland Miners' Association on the joint committee ?—Yes, and have been for some time.

1225. You also have heard the evidence given to-day by Mr. Toyn ?—I have.

1226. Do you generally agree with that evidence ?—Yes, I generally acquiesce in it, but I should like to supplement it in some instances.

1227. Would you kindly state any points on which you may disagree with him, or any points on which you may desire to supplement his statements ?—In regard to the sliding scale and arbitration my views do not exactly coincide with Mr. Toyn's.

1228. Will you state what views you hold on those subjects ?—My objection to the sliding scale is not on the same grounds as Mr. Norman's, but on account of the inadequate basis of the scale, as I think. I do not object to it on the ground of the gradations. I do not think over a long period probably that that would make much difference, taking the rise and fall in the market. I do believe that the basis of the scale has been slightly lower than the masters could have afforded to pay. I think the sliding scale is the best method that we have been able to arrive at for settling wages. It certainly had the effect that Mr. Toyn said. The apparent effect of it any way was that the membership of the Association considerably decreased during the period that this scale extended over. We found that the members did not care to take the interest in the Association that they ought to have done, and several of them fell off, but our scale was, I believe, as perfect with regard to its working as it was possible to get a scale, and the difference of course was on account of the basis being low, and its not being sufficiently sensitive.

1229. Sufficiently sensitive did you say ?—Yes, there were one or two objections there. We were graduated and regulated on what we call the decimal principle in connexion with the scale, and reductions to the men are in all cases objectionable ; but one of the best methods of reduction I think that it would be possible to produce was the scale that we had in connexion with the Cleveland miners, because very often at the quarterly ascertainments we had reductions which did not entail above 2*d.* per week on the earnings of the men ; sometimes 6*d.*, probably, so that we were gradually let down, and the men did not take objections then to a reduction that they do sometimes when the employers come for a very large one, such as 10 or 15 per

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

cent. I believe that the men did not feel the effects of the reductions so seriously as they do when they are called upon to forego a considerable amount of their wages. That was my impression about the sliding scale, because the men gradually accommodated themselves to the altered circumstances in connexion with this scale. Mr. Trow rather pushed Mr. Toyn in connexion with arbitration. That was in connexion with our method of settling wages by conciliation, which has been very successful both generally and locally. I have taken part myself in, I might say, scores of settlements as referee locally, where there has been local disputes cropping up at mines. In very nearly all the cases we have been successful without reference to an umpire. That is, at the joint committee when disputes, which have originated of course with the men and employers, have been brought up there and have been regulated sometimes by me and another member of the executive, sometimes by some other members of the executive, and we have met at a certain place, of course at a convenient place, to settle these disputes. We have visited the mine, seen the nature of the employment and such like, and we have generally been able to settle without reference to an umpire, that is without calling in an independent party. To us, the difficulty of getting an independent party is this ; the employers very often will not take a party that we recommend from a labouring point of view, and sometimes we object very strenuously to a man the employers recommend ; and so we hit upon a medium course betwixt that, and get a man who knows nothing about it. That is very often the position we are landed in in choosing an arbitrator, and the result is not very satisfactory. A man of that description does not take into consideration the nature of the employment, but he simply bases his decision upon the amount of money that the man is able to earn. It does not matter what is the nature of the risks or anything that he is put to in obtaining it ; the umpire simply takes a mere monetary view of the affair altogether, and sometimes that is not very satisfactory. Some work in the mines is worth more in some pits than it is in others, and some mines are much more risky than other mines ; but you cannot get a man who is not practically acquainted with that to take cognisance of it ; he simply ignores it altogether and regulates it from a mere monetary point of view. Comparing the arbitration of an umpire with conciliation in a local sense, it is generally to the disadvantage of the workmen to accept an umpire. Take, for instance, one of the last cases that I had a few months ago. We were offered concessions from the claim which was made by the masters, but we could not agree to them ; we thought we were not getting enough, and we thought that we could not make our position any worse if we referred the point to any particular individual. We did refer it to a particular individual, and we considerably lost

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

by it. We did not get anything like as good terms as we could have obtained without referring it to that individual. We lost 2½ per cent. by that.

1230. Without mentioning the name of the individual, what was his profession or occupation in life?—In that particular instance he was a mining engineer, and he therefore had some knowledge of the facts, but in several instances we have chosen men outside altogether. But we had confidence that the man would do what was right, and I think he did in that particular instance. That conciliation is better than arbitration I could prove, by pointing out that we lost 2½ per cent. in that particular instance. Now I think that if conciliation failed entirely we should refer to arbitration rather than go to a strike. That is my impression about it.

1231. You are now speaking of general questions?—Yes. When we come to that point I think we should go to arbitration as a last resource, but I do believe, on the other hand, that we should be prepared to make considerable sacrifices before we should arbitrate. That is the impression that I have about our settlement in connexion with wages.

1232. Is there any other point that you would like to name to us?—There is a point about the hours which has never been discussed. The hours of the miners have been referred to, and the hours of the working lad, but we have never got to the hours of the enginemen, and the boiler-minders, and such like in the district. Unfortunately their hours are considerably in excess in the district of what we think they should be. In many instances the pumping-engineman, the fan-engineman, the boiler-minder, and the firemen are called upon to work 12 hours with the exception of the week-ends. That we think is an excessive time to work in connexion with this work. We think that there should be some change in their hours, and we live in the hopes of improving their position in that particular instance by conciliation with the employers if it is possible.

1233. I believe the enginemen are also members of your Association?—Yes, they are members of our Association as far as they are members of any association in the district.

Mr. *Burt*.

1234. Do you agree with Mr. Toyn and Mr. Norman with regard to the question of hours?—If you refer to legislative interference, I might say that I quite agree with them. I have a decided objection to legislative interference in connexion with the hours, for two particular reasons, I might say for three reasons. I have an objection to it because in the first instance we can settle the hours much more satisfactorily ourselves I believe. In the second instance, if we admitted the principle that Parliament had a right to interfere with our hours, I do not see how we could object to the principle of Parliament interfering with our wages. That would be only carrying it a step further. That is my impression about it. I

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

think if it was not admitting that principle, it would be sailing dangerously near the wind in that particular instance. I think of course we should strenuously oppose it, as far as I have been able to ascertain the views of the men, and we have ascertained the opinions of the men in our district pretty fully upon that point. We have some of those men. I do not know why they should be termed New Unionists; we have a few in our district who are continually agitating for this movement, but I might say authoritatively that they do not represent 10 per cent. of the men in the district as far as we have been able to ascertain. We have probably about 30 lodges in the district, and about one or two of these lodges out of the whole are the only ones which are supporting this particular movement, and they do not seem to make progress at all in connexion with it. The men do not seem to support it to any extent whatever. They feel that their manliness to a certain extent should be left alone; that they should not be interfered with in that direction in any way. Of course they believe in parliamentary interference as far as youth is concerned, because youths are not strong enough to protect their physical condition. I believe that eight hours in connexion with lads is quite sufficient. I believe that the more so for them than for men. I noticed yesterday, in some of the evidence given by the Durham miners, that they support a 10 hours for lads; they think that that is not too much. They were comparing a man's work with a lad's work; but I should not compare that; that is not a proper comparison in my estimation. In my estimation the comparison should be with regard to their constitutions. A man of course has got his constitution made, and he is better able to withstand the vitiated air, the noxious gases and such like which are met with in mines, than the tender constitution of a lad about 13 or 14 years of age, because his constitution is then forming. I think, therefore, that it is more necessary that lads should be protected in that direction than that men should be.

1235. At the same time you think that eight hours are quite long enough underground?—Yes.

1236. Will you state your third reason?—It has escaped my memory.

Lord *Hartington*.

1237. You stated that you could regulate the hours more satisfactorily between yourselves and the employers, and then you stated that parliamentary interference with the hours might lead to parliamentary interference with wages, and then there was a third point; if that occurs to you later on you might mention it?—Thank you, I will do so.

Mr. *Tom Mann*.

1238. Respecting the engine men, and the boiler men, who are working 12 hours a day; how many are there of them?—Roughly speaking, I should say about 100.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

1239. Do they do that five or six days a week?—These men are continually at work, but they are relieved to some extent at the week-ends. From Monday morning at 6 o'clock, till Saturday morning at 6 o'clock, they work 12 hours a day, and then an eight hours' shift counts from Saturday morning at 6 o'clock till Monday morning at 6 o'clock.

1240. Does that apply to all of them?—That is an agreement made 12 months ago by the workmen with the employers. The question came up before the Joint Committee. The men expressed dissatisfaction with their hours and also with their wages, and it was relegated to the men's managers, and some of the miner's executive, and their position was improved by reducing the hours at the week-ends, and by slightly increasing their wages.

1241. Is it within your knowledge that some of these men now work 15 and 16 hours at the week-end?—They do not do it unless they undertake to work another man's time, and that of course is their own fault.

1242. It is done?—I daresay it is done. Some men are very eager to do it. If they like to avoid it of course they are in a position to avoid it, but some of the men are very eager; some do not care about working overtime, but some are quite ready to go and put two shifts in at the week-end if it is possible to be done.

1243. Your expression of disapproval of a parliamentary method of reducing the hours, together with your decided expressions of disapproval of long hours, and you consider 12 hours long in this case, and that eight hours are sufficient?—No, I would not like to be put into that position.

1244. Perhaps I have gone a little too far?—I said that I thought a 12 hours' day excessively long in connexion with the engine man.

1245. Do you not propose that eight hours is sufficient for the men?—I do not think it would be policy to make a universal eight hours Bill.

1246. I am not referring to the idea of a Bill; do not mention the Bill again?—Or to go in for a universal policy of eight hours. I do not think that could be successful.

1247. Is it not desirable for these stokers and enginemen that they should have to work only eight hours; is it not desirable that they should have the chance of living, the same as the miners?—I do not think so. Their work is nothing so arduous, nothing so dangerous as the miners. What we think is that about 10 hours a day would be quite sufficient if it were possible to arrange that.

1248. That is right, if it is possible to do it?—And where it is not possible to do that of course arrangements should be made for altering the shifts so that they could shorten their hours and really bring them down to eight.

1249. Meaning thereby I presume, if it is necessary to have shifts all round, to work three shifts of course in the 24 hours?—Yes; for instance, we will take a fan-man, that is a man who is working the ventilator at a mine. Those men work 12 hours; we think that is too long for them, and we think that in that particular instance they should have eight hours; that is our idea; but we do not think that the men should be put on a level with the miner, because their work is nothing so arduous as a miner's.

1250. Does not that carry with it the necessity for your Union taking action pretty quickly with a view to getting these hours reduced, inasmuch as they are members of your organisation, and you say that they are working now excessively, and also that you disapprove of any parliamentary interference?—Our Union took steps in connexion with it about 12 months ago, and we got the improvement, as I pointed out, at the week-ends, which was a considerable improvement for the men, and we shall undoubtedly try to improve still further.

1251. Are any negotiations going on now?—Yes, we have resolutions in connexion with it to the effect that the hours are too long for this particular class of men.

1252. That is being attended to by the executive of the Union?—It probably will be.

1253. Just a question respecting these machines. Are you familiar with the machine drills?—I know the nature of them very well.

1254. Do you confirm the statements made by Mr. Toyn as to the dislodgment of men where the machines have been introduced?—Yes, the machines undoubtedly have done that.

1255. Do you confirm the statement made by Mr. Toyn that they are to be expected in other mines shortly?—I only know yet, as Mr. Toyn does, of one mine where the machines are likely to be introduced. There are some rumours that they will be introduced in others, but I do not think they will become any more general than they are, for the same reason which Mr. Toyn gave. Of course anyone who is practically engaged in mining can better understand it. We are working out what is called "brokens," and the machines are inconvenient in brokens, as a rule. For instance, I know of one mine where they had a machine in, and where they have been obliged to take it out. You see there is so much timber in its road, and they like a pretty clear course. There is one thing in connexion with these machines which Mr. Toyn did not mention, and that is, that they select the best of the ground in the mines for working these machines, and the miners have to work the worst. It is a grievance, and a serious grievance, very often with the men. Mines are divided into districts. Some districts are much safer than other districts, much nicer to work, much cleaner, and do not require the timber, and therefore there is not so much danger there. When timber is absent in mines, you may at once come to the conclusion that the mine is a pretty safe-working mine. Now it is in these safe districts where these machines are brought into operation, and the men of course are put into the districts which are much more dangerous. It is an objection which you often hear alleged against the introduction of these machines, that they are forcing, that they

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

are concentrating the men in the more dangerous parts of the mines.

1256. Could you tell us what is the average wage received by the men who follow up the machines?—Mr. Toyn overstated it. I seriously disagree with Mr. Toyn about the average wage. I do not think the fillers make anything like 4*s.* 6*d.* a day. I think if he had given it at 3*s.* 10*d.* or 4*s.*, probably he would be at the margin. That is my impression about it, because they do not get much more than 3½*d.* a ton for filling it, and they fill about 13 or 14 tons per shift probably.

1257. 3*s.* 10*d.* or 4*s.* per day?—That is my idea.

1258. How many days a week?—About five, I think.

1259. Five?—You can take that on the average.

1260. That would be 20*s.*?—Yes; of course the other man makes an exorbitant wage in comparison with the miners.

1261. The other two men you mean, do you not?—Yes; the other two men would probably make 10*s.* or 11*s.* a day each in connexion with it.

Sir *Edward Harland.*

1262. Are you referring to the machine men?—Yes, the men who have charge of the machine. I do not know why that has occurred. I cannot see for the life of me why it has occurred. There is not any particular skill required in using the machine. I believe a man could learn to use it in a few hours. They are all very simply constructed. They are constructed on the simplest principle, I think, that it is possible to construct a machine on, so that they should not be getting out of order very often, and there does not require any special skill to use them. The charger should be better paid, I admit; he runs much more risk than any other man in connexion with it. He has to charge the holes, and of course he gets into the face of the mine, and probably charges ten or a dozen holes. Those have to be fired, and that requires more care. Then he has the stone to get down, which is one of the most dangerous practices in the mine. I believe that his rate of wages should be above the standard rate of wages, but not to the extent that it is. He has a lot of smoke to contend with. You can conceive that there is a lot of smoke when a man fires probably ten or a dozen holes in a mine in the face of a working, each one containing a charge probably of a pound or a pound and a half of powder. That makes his work much more dangerous than it would be under ordinary circumstances.

1263. I should gather from the statements made by yourself and Mr. Toyn that each of these machines does the work of about 18 men, and that there are 12 men to do it?—Yes.

1264. And that two of the men get, as you say, 10*s.* or 12*s.*, the others getting 3*s.* 10*d.* or 4*s.* a day?—That is my idea of it.

1265. Whilst the hand-drill miners get about 5*s.* a day?—About 5*s.* 2*d.* a day. It recognises

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

the district rate of wages, and it will average that. That amount is not universal, and you must not imagine that because a man is working in the Cleveland mine that he is getting 5*s.* 2*d.* a day; he might only be getting 3*s.* 6*d.*, while another man might be getting 7*s.* 6*d.*, but of course, fixing it on an average, the whole of the men's wages are classed together, and we strike an average from the whole of the earnings of the men, not from individual cases.

1266. It would appear that not only does it reduce the wages of the men who follow it up, so that they are getting an average of 3*s.* 10*d.* or 4*s.*, instead of an average of 5*s.* 2*d.*, but also that by the best ground being selected, and the hand-drillers being thrown back upon the worst, they of course have greater difficulty in giving the average output, and consequently their average takings are reduced; would that not be so?—I did not exactly follow that question.

1267. You stated that as the best pits are selected for the machine drill, therefore the hand-drillers are thrown back upon those pits where there is the greatest difficulty in putting out a given amount?—Yes, that is so.

1268. That means that the wages of the hand-drillers is reduced proportionately to the increased work required, does it not?—It might not reduce the rate of wages, but it might increase the danger. We have a standard price in the district, based according to the sliding scale, upon a selling price of Cleveland pig-iron of 34*s.* We obtain 9½*d.* per ton for getting ironstone, when a No. 3 Cleveland pig-iron obtains 34*s.* Now that recognises the district rate. But in specially dangerous ground, and specially fast ground, that price might be deviated from you see, so that if the miner was driving into specially bad ground he might be able to make an average rate of wage, because he would be getting more per ton for the material got.

1269. It would be increased on account of the conditions?—Yes; but his danger probably would be considerably increased, and probably his labour would be considerably increased.

1270. Is the 4*s.* a day taken by these men at five days a week in your opinion a proper standard of living: does that secure a proper standard of living for a man?—Certainly not, not at the present time.

1271. Then, considering that you are on good terms with your employers, and that you are opposed to parliamentary interference with regard to the reduction of the hours, what do you propose doing in the Union with a view to putting the conditions under which you work on a satisfactory basis?—You see we have not so much to grumble at, as Mr. Toyn explained, in the price paid for obtaining this mineral by machinery. We do not think that they pay an inadequate price compared with the price paid to the hand-drill men, but that it is so adjusted that some of the men work at a starvation price while others get a much superior price. Of course, our impression is that it should be more nearly if not exactly divided

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

between them; that it should be more equally divided than it is at the present time. But they have got into a system by which the tonnage price is not paid to them for getting and filling the material, but is paid to one party for getting and the other for filling, although the filling of the material is much more laborious work than the getting.

Marquis of Hartington.

1272. And the worst paid?—Much worst paid. It is not the most skilful work. I do not want to have that impression formed, but I think what it lacks in skill is made up in extra labour, and that they should be more fully compensated for that. I believe Mr. Toyn's memory did not quite serve him this morning when he said we had never brought it up before the Joint Committee. We have brought it up before the Joint Committee, but then it was not of sufficient interest to the Joint Committee for us to obtain a decision. It was more in its initiatory stages at that time when it was brought up. The generality of the mines had not the machines, and so it only applied to one or two individuals, and practically, of course, it referred to the case of those one or two individuals, and we could not get the terms that we thought we ought to have.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

1273. I should like to ask your opinion as to what would be a proper wage for a man to receive in your district?—Well, there could be a lot said about that. I do not think, taking a standard, that at some periods a man requires as big a wage as he does at others. My opinion is that the value of money should be considered. Money is much more valuable at one period than it is at another.

1274. What do you think is the minimum that a man, his wife, and his family could subsist upon with reasonable comfort in Cleveland, having regard to what you have to pay for house, coals, provisions, and so on?—I should say that a man should not have less than 30*s.* a week to live on any way.

1275. That is what I wanted to get at, whether you would fix some such wage as that as being a proper rate below which you could not satisfactorily consent to go?—You see a miner's work is much more laborious than the generality of men's work is. He requires more sustenance because he works much harder. I am not working as a miner now, but there is not another class of men in the country which works to the extent that a miner, and especially an ironstone miner, does. An ironstone miner now is obtaining a tonnage rate more than double that obtained by any other class of miner in the country. Of course there are reasons for that. He works a thicker seam, for instance, and the facilities for obtaining the stone are much superior probably to what they are in the thin seams of a coal mine. Then the specific gravity of the material is much greater than that of coal, so that he naturally has to

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

remove and lift about a great weight. That great weight of material tells considerably upon his physical system, and he requires more sustenance to do it; his work is more laborious work really, although it can be done.

1276. One other question respecting the introduction of the machine. About what number of men are working at the pit where you understand this machine is to be introduced?—I am sure I could not say.

1277. Would it be 100, or 300, or 400?—Perhaps 400 or 500, I should think.

1278. 400 or 500?—Probably more, I could not say.

1279. And do you suppose something like one-third of those men would be discharged in consequence of the introduction of the machine?—Some will undoubtedly, with this reservation—unless the employers intend to increase the output of the pit by the same number. You see that it is quite possible for them not to decrease the number of workmen by that action, but to considerably increase the output of the mine, and they might have that in view—I should probably think they have, but I do not know.

1280. In other cases that has not happened?—No, in some other cases it has been done without.

1281. And if that does not happen in this case there will be the same output or a larger output with a reduced number of men?—Yes, there will be a larger output if the same number of men is employed.

1282. So far as you can see, what will become of those men?—They will have to leave the district, there will not be anything else for them. I might point out a bit more about these machines which Mr. Toyn did not bring out in connexion with them. When these machines were first introduced 50 tons a day was recognised as a good output for them, but now 150 tons in some instances is recognised. Mr. Toyn was considerably below the mark in saying 130 tons I think. I know of arbitration cases where I have been on in which we have had to deal with outputs reaching very nearly 150 tons per day with one machine and also 160. Of course there has been some improvement in the machine. I might say that there is not one class of machine used, they are different classes of machines and with some they can get more than with others.

Mr. *G. Balfour.*

1283. Would that larger output increase the wages of the men employed?—No, the price was considerably reduced to meet that, and the men did not get the advantage. They were put on day work with these machines when they were started. They obtained probably 50 tons a day. Then some ingenious manager came down—an acute gentleman—and said, "Now I "will give you a couple of pounds if you can "get up to 60 tons in this next week" and so they went on. Then there was a premium upon 100 tons, and that increased until it got to the very extent of what the men are able to

Mr. *G. Balfour* continued.

do in that kind of manner. It was very foolish on the part of the men to exert themselves. Now they have to do it and there is no reservation for them but to meet this position.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

1284. Are the two men who follow the machines and who get a very much higher wage than the others skilled mechanics?—No, they have been brought from driver lads sometimes; in some instances they have just picked them from drivers and they are not married men at all even; they are just young men.

Sir *Edward Harland.*

1285. Would you consider that these machines, so far as your experience of machinery for saving-labour is concerned, are more to be blamed for saving labour than any other class of machine that you have in the country?—Not at all. I do not think that the destruction of labour is probably so great as appears to us to be, because we must remember this principle, that it requires a trade to supply this machinery and sometimes if we look all round there is not such a loss as there appears to be. Of course we are just speaking of the inconvenience that it puts the men to at the period when it is first brought into operation. That is the point.

1286. This machine is simply for the purpose of drilling holes I think?—Yes.

1287. Where those holes are drilled by hand would you not consider that a very monotonous and proportionately very tiring part of the work?—Drilling by hand?

1288. Yes, what we call jumping the hole, I suppose?—Not to an experienced miner—sometimes he has to do that to rest.

1289. That is for a change?—Yes. He will probably obtain a block of iron-stone with 8, or 9, or 10 tons in it. Of course he has to break that up into small pieces, not above half a hundredweight or something like that. He has after that sometimes to take a drill and bore a hole to rest himself.

1290. As a change of work?—Yes, and that does away with the monotony of the work to a certain extent.

Marquis of Hartington.

1291. I am not quite certain whether I understood whether you would prefer to have a sliding scale or not—supposing you could get the basis and gradation settled to your satisfaction?—If we could get an improved basis I should be in favour of a sliding scale. I have the impression that that is really the best method of regulating wages if it were possible to get an improved scale. Now we do not see the possibility of it. Take a kindred industry to us which is very closely connected; they formed a scale but they could not improve their basis.

1292. What industry was that?—I am referring to the blast-furnacemen. I think they had a scale very nearly on the same basis as ours; it was regulated on the same price, that is with regard to the selling price of No. 3 pig-iron and

Marquis of Hartington—continued.

I believe the same principle guided them as guided us. They have just renewed the scale without any improvements. There is one thing probably which makes our men more opposed to a scale, and that is that since we have abandoned it we have improved our position. Over a period of 21 months we have improved our position to the extent of 5 per cent. by the abandonment of the scale, and yet employers will not improve the basis of the scale at the present time I think. We have not entered into negotiations to try that.

1293. You settle wages now on a sort of rule of thumb, in fact?—Yes, we settle them for three months, probably, or for any time that it might strike us to fix. The executive is empowered by the men to meet the masters, and if they can obtain a settlement it has to be done. That is the principle now.

1294. But, as I understood, if you could agree with the masters upon a basis you would prefer a sliding scale?—I think that would be the best method of regulating wages.

1295. You would chance its effect upon the Union, which Mr. Toyn spoke about?—Yes, I would chance its effect on the Union. I am frightened, of course, but I have reasons for chancing that effect. Probably the sliding scale altogether had not the effect on the Union which was apparent. I do not know; I would not like to say it had. You know when times are very depressed and men have a great difficulty in making a living it is a very hard job to extract the money from them for keeping up their contributions. They will pay their contributions this week, while the next week, probably, or the next fortnight they will neglect to pay, and at a month's end it is much harder to pay, and so they go on and gradually dwindle away in that manner; not that they have any objection to unionism at all. There is not one in a hundred, nor yet one in a thousand, but what says, "Oh, we ought to be in, but really we "cannot afford it." That is the difficulty we have to contend with. When our Union suffered so severely for lack of membership it was in very bad times, and we shall be better able to compare our position if such times were to occur again without a scale.

1296. Do you agree with what I understood Mr. Toyn to say, that the wages are now nearly as much as the masters could afford to give you?—I think so. They might probably go a bit further, but I think we have got the best terms that it is almost possible to obtain under any principle. That is my impression about that.

1297. Are you of opinion that the wages of your men are unduly reduced by the competition of unemployed labour?—What we believe is, that our wages are reduced to the extent that they are reduced, by the gambling propensities of the pig-iron trade. That is what we believe affects our wages more seriously. We believe a good deal of the trade in connexion with pig-iron is not genuine; it cannot be genuine because some days pig-iron will be worth 38*s.*, and in a day or two it will be worth

Marquis of Hartington—continued.

368. Transactions like that are not genuine, because pig-iron cannot alter in value so quickly as to be felt to that extent.

1298. How does that reduce your wages; cannot the masters afford to pay them?—The masters cannot obtain the price. They say they are in the hands of the bears, or they are in the hands of the bulls, as the case might be, and they have to go with them, and of course they only obtain the prices that are marketable on a certain day. Therefore we recognise the principle that they are entitled to pay our wages upon the amount that they are able to obtain for their materials.

1299. Yes, but you are not of opinion that where there is a large amount of unemployed labour seeking for employment it has the effect of reducing your wages?—I do not think so; it might to a little extent; not on the principle that we work, it has not.

1300. The men qualified to work in your industry are mostly employed. There are not a large number of men out of work?—They are employed at the present time.

1301. Are the men employed in your industry men who have been generally reared in it; do they come in as boys?—That obtains now more than it did. At one time the amount of labour was inadequate, and the employers had to take steps to introduce outside labour, and they brought a great many farm labourers into the district for miners.

1302. Could a farm labourer earn average wages if he came in fresh to your business?—When he first came he could not do it, but after they have undergone a sufficient training, farm labourers make the best of miners.

1303. Do any come in now?—Of late I have not known of any cases. The most that came in came about 1874 and 1875. A good many of those men are still working there. There are very few coming now, because there is a clause in the Mines Regulations Bill which prohibits their coming in and working, unless they can get some one to take charge of the place with them. Some of the men who are alive to their own interests object to it; they say the less labour there is the better our position will be, and the better position we shall be in to extract a better wage.

1304. I suppose from the agricultural labourers boys come into the business?—Yes, and get employment in mines.

1305. But not to such an extent as to compete seriously—to produce a competition which has any effect in reducing wages?—No.

Mr. *Dale.*

1306. Boys who come in as such are mostly the sons of men employed in the mines, I presume?—Now they are, but sometimes they get others from outside.

Mr. *Trow.*

1307. You stated with regard to the price that it is regulated by gambling in warrants of pig-iron?—Yes, I did.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

1308. How are we to arrive at a satisfactory price for a basis if the paper price, which influences your men, is up and down day by day, at the mercy of the bulls and the bears?—My impression about it is that it will be much better to take the weekly quoted prices.

1309. Can that be the real and legitimate price when it is bandied up and down by the bulls and bears day after day?—I do not believe the price is legitimate at all.

1310. Must you not come back to the ascertained price?—The ascertained price is the effect of that; the ascertained price must be the effect of that fluctuation in the market.

1311. When men are not buying for legitimate purposes every day, will you explain how the ascertained price can be much affected by the transactions of the bulls and bears, which are up and down day by day?—As far as I have been able to ascertain, it is this: the accountants go over the books of the employers and ascertain the prices at which they have sold through the quarter, and of course, if any of those prices which have obtained during these fluctuations are there, the effect acts on our wages, just in the same way as though we took the daily price.

1312. But how can the transactions of the bulls and bears come into the maker's books?—Only so far as the makers have sold to the bulls and bears.

1313. But you see that the bulls and the bears you have referred to do not affect the price upon the maker's books; in their case it is only a transaction between the bulls and the bears, but the maker's price is fixed upon his books when the contract is taken?—Supposing there is a merchant, who is a bear as well, buying off the master, that does it; that price must come into operation then.

1314. You see that is the exchange price to which you are referring?—It is the price quoted; it is the effect.

1315. Do you think that the quoted price is in the least reliable, or that anybody sells for legitimate purposes?—Yes, the quoted price is reliable.

1316. You think it is?—Yes, it is reliable and I will tell you why. We took the trouble to pick out the weekly quoted prices over a period of 10 years, and to compare them with the ascertained prices over that period. We had a sliding scale which regulated our wages for 10 years. We had the whole of the ascertained prices tabulated for that period. Then, for curiosity sake, or for the sake of deciding whether we would sign another sliding scale or not when that time terminated, we took all the quoted prices throughout this 10 years and compared them with the ascertained price; they only differed to the extent of about 6*d.* or 7*d.*, and that was compensated for to a certain extent by the amount that was deducted for the free-on-board principle.

1317. But you had no proof that the contract under which the ascertained price was made was not made previous to the quoted price?—

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

Not at all. The only proof we had was that the two compared very closely over that period.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

1318. Supposing you were thinking of re-establishing the sliding scale, would it, in your opinion, be an advantage to arrange that it should remain in force for a period of less than two years, say for a period of one year?—I think it would be a decided improvement to a scale.

1319. It would to some extent obviate one of the difficulties mentioned by Mr. Toyn?—What part do you refer to?

1320. The danger that a union would lose a large number of its members, supposing wages were fixed for a long period to come?—It would meet that to a certain extent, of course. I believe it would be a considerable improvement not to fix it for such a long time if ever there was another sliding scale. But I am frightened; there seems to be a disposition on the part of the men to avoid having another.

1321. Even for a shorter period?—Even for a shorter period at the present time. There might come a time when they might see the advantages of it.

Mr. *Burt.*

1322. I want to clear up one point. When you said, in answer to Lord Hartington, that

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

miners had obtained 5 per cent. since the sliding scale was obtained, did you mean 5 per cent. more than the sliding scale would have given them had it continued in operation?—Five per cent. more over a period of 21 months. I might say, in order more fully to answer that question, that we have to some extent lost that position, that, taking it over the whole of the period, that is, for two years, I believe it is about 3¾ per cent. better terms.

1323. You are now 3¾ per cent. better off than you would have been had the sliding scale continued in operation?—Yes.

Sir *Edward Harland.*

1324. Just to complete the answer which you gave to Mr. Gerald Balfour. The reply which was produced would indicate that your objection to a sliding scale was that it would fix the wages for two years; but I presume the great object of the sliding scale is that although an agreement might be made for two years, if the market rose and fell in the meantime the wages should rise and fall. I presume you meant to convey that?—Yes.

1325. Although the agreement for the sliding scale might be for two years or for 10 years?—Yes; we do not fix the rate for two years we only fix it to be regulated in that way.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till Wednesday, 22nd July, at 11.30.

THIRD DAY.

Commission Room, Westminster Hall, Wednesday, 22nd July 1891.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE MARQUIS OF HARTINGTON, M.P.

MR. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

Sir E. HARLAND, Bart., M.P.
Mr. G. BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.
Mr. E. TROW.
The Right Hon. Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH, Bart., M.P., Mr. J. C. BOLTON, M.P., Professor MARSHALL, Mr. TOM MANN, and Mr. H. TAIT (Group B.), and the Right Hon. Sir J. E. GORST, Q.C., M.P., The Right Hon. A. J. MUNDELLA, M.P., The Right Hon. LEONARD COURTNEY, M.P., Mr. M. AUSTIN (Group C.) also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Joint Secretaries.

Mr. JOHN DENNINGTON called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

1326. You are the Secretary of the Cleveland Mine Owners' Association, who have their offices in Middlesbro' ?—I am.

1327. What particular branch of industry does your Association represent ?—The Cleveland ironstone mining.

1328. And the district in which that industry is carried on is Cleveland ?—Cleveland in North Yorkshire.

1329. Can you state the number of employers or establishments connected with your Association ?—There are eight firms connected with the Association.

1330. And what number of mines do those eight firms own ?—The Association regard the number of mines as 19, but for the purposes of the Government inspectors' reports I believe they are counted as 24, if not 25.

1331. Can you state the aggregate number of workpeople employed by such establishments ?—On the 31st December 1890 the number was 5,397 persons at the associated mines. The number of persons for the whole of the mines in the district, that is, associated and unassociated, for 1890, was 6,579, according to the Government returns.

1332. Are you prepared to state what are the constitution, general objects, subscriptions, and benefits of your Association ?—The Association is an organisation of mine owners who have adopted certain rules for their guidance. A copy of those rules I shall be glad to hand in (*handing in copy of rules*). Their chief objects are the regulation of matters between the associated firms and their workmen, and the protection of firms by mutual indemnity against losses from strikes. Subscriptions are levied on the members of the Mine Owners' Association in proportion to their output of mineral.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

1333. With a view to answering more fully than has been done in the replies to the printed questions numbered 6 and 7, which printed questions are: "If your Association deals directly "or indirectly with matters of difference arising "between associated employers and their work-"people, will you describe the manner in which "it so acts ?" and "Does your Association take "action with a view of fixing rates of wages, "regulating the hours of labour, or generally "prescribing conditions of service for the obser-"vance of members of your Association ?" You have prepared a series of questions which I propose to put to you, have you not ?—Yes.

1334. Perhaps, before doing so, you would describe the existence of the Joint Committee referred to in your answer, which runs, "A Joint "Committee consisting of six employers' repre-"sentatives and six workmen's representatives "meet when required to consider matters other "than general district questions affecting firms "and their workmen." How long has the Joint Committee between the Cleveland Mine Owners' Association and the Cleveland Ironstone Miners' Association been established in Cleveland ?—More than 18 years—since April 1873.

1335. Are you the Secretary of the Joint Committee, and how long have you held the appointment ?—I have held the appointment of secretary to the Joint Committee over 18 years, since May 1873; that is practically from the commencement of the Committee's existence.

1336. Then the Joint Committee's secretarial work forms a part of your understood duties ?—That is so.

1337. How often does the Committee meet ?—I have taken out the number of meetings held since the Joint Committee was established. I have divided this number into two periods: I

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

the eight years ending with December 1880 the Joint Committee met 46 times; or about six times a year. Then in the 10 years from January 1881 to December 1890 the Joint Committee met 48 times; that was as nearly as possible five times in each year on the average.

1338. About what number of questions come before the Joint Committee?—The number of questions varies, but I have counted the questions for last year, and I think that year may be taken as something like an average or typical year, and I find that during 1890 there were four meetings of the Joint Committee and 29 questions dealt with, that is to say, an average of about seven questions for each meeting.

1339. How many mines are there under the Mine Owners' Association?—In the Mine Owners' Association we reckon 19, although, as I have said, the Government returns speak of one of our mines as more than one in some instances. There are four, if not five, mines in Cleveland outside the Association.

1340. The number of questions then would equal about one and a half per annum for each mine?—Based on our 19 mines in the Association the 29 questions would be about equal to one and a half question for each mine in the year.

1341. Can you tell us how these 29 questions in 1890 were disposed of?—I have looked into that. I find that 18 were referred to mines managers and miners as arbitrators and five were referred to the mine owners' secretary and the miners' agent; two were withdrawn or struck out through some informality, and the remaining four were remitted to the firms themselves to dispose of.

1342. How many of the questions filed were from the men and how many from the employers?—There were 23 of the 29 questions from the men; six were questions from the employers.

1343. The Joint Committee, it is presumed, operates mutually by both dealing with local questions of reduction in wages and of advance in wages?—I think the Joint Committee would scarcely have an existence if it did not operate mutually by considering claims from each side.

1344. Are the questions which come before the Committee chiefly such as relate to local advances and reductions?—The questions submitted to the meetings generally have for their object the obtaining of advances or reductions.

1345. How many of the 18 local arbitrations of 1890 resulted in advances?—I find that of the 18 local references in 1890 seven of them resulted in advances.

1346. How many of them resulted in reductions?—Only one resulted in a reduction.

1347. How were the other 10 disposed of?—Nine were considered by the arbitrators as not proven and one was not directly a question of money.

1348. Is it frequently found necessary for the arbitrators to call in an umpire?—Not very frequently; this was done on two occasions in 1890. Both the miners' representatives and the employers' representatives prefer coming to a decision without the aid of outsiders if it can be done.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

1349. How long does each sitting of the Joint Committee last on the average?—The sittings vary very considerably; perhaps from a duration of one hour to three hours; call it an average of about two hours per meeting.

1350. Is dissatisfaction manifested on the employers' side with regard to occupying time with small questions?—I have heard that complaints were made that we were occupying too much time in considering trifles; but I think the time that is spent in disposing of difficulties is well spent: it means the killing of germs of discord that might lead to worse consequences.

1351. How is the chairman of the Joint Committee elected?—Each meeting of the Joint Committee elects its own chairman. The chairman is generally the president or vice-president of the Mine Owners' Association.

1352. How do they vote at meetings of the Joint Committee?—As a matter of fact we have not much voting at the Joint Committee; but if either side should be short of its proper number it is understood that the same number of men as of employers vote. There is little business, however, actually settled at the meetings themselves. It is nearly all referred to third parties; that is to say, to mines managers and miners to be dealt with at the mines themselves, after the questions have been to some extent ventilated and their exact nature determined by the discussion at the Joint Committee meetings.

1353. Perhaps by little business you mean not many cases are finally issued at the Joint Committee?—I mean that.

1354. But much business is done, I suppose, in the way of arranging that they shall be amicably issued?—Yes.

1355. Is a complete record kept of the proceedings of the Joint Committee?—A record is kept of the Joint Committee's proceedings: not actually a verbatim record. The miners' representatives and the mine owners' representatives are furnished with printed or lithographed copies of the proceedings after the meetings. I can, if it is desired, hand in a copy of the Joint Committee's proceedings extending over the past year and a half. (*See Appendix* 4.)

1356. Are those the minutes of every meeting of the Joint Committee held last year or this year?—These are the minutes of the four meetings of 1890 to which reference has already been made, and also minutes of two meetings in this year.

1357. Are these all the meetings held in fact during that period?—Yes.

1358. You have no paid chairman of the Joint Committee, as in Durham?—The chairman of the Joint Committee in Cleveland is not a paid official, but he is an honorary chairman.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

1359. Is the cost to the Mine Owners' Association of the Joint Committee heavy?—I have never heard any complaints made on this score. The cost of the Joint Committee in Cleveland has varied from 50*l.* to 140*l.* a year. The average cost over the past 10 years has been 75*l.* per annum; that is to say, so far as such cost can be separated from the ordinary expenses of the Mine Owners' Association.

1360. On what is the 75*l.* expended?—The expenses are chiefly incurred in remunerating the mines managers for visiting mines to settle local disputes.

1361. Each side paying its own costs; is that so?—Each side paying its own referees.

1362. Have you handed in the rules of the Joint Committee?—If it is desired I can hand in a copy of the Joint Committee's rules. (*See Appendix* 2.)

1363. There are two other witnesses appointed by the Cleveland Mine Owners' Association, Mr. Hugh Bell and Mr. Walker, and their evidence will cover certain other points of our inquiry, is that so?—Yes.

1364. Have I drawn from you all the information that you desire to offer personally?—I might perhaps refer to certain evidence given here a week ago as to arbitrations not having been held in reference to the machine men in Cleveland; but the other witnesses, I think, are quite competent to deal with all that may arise on that subject.

1365. I should hope that it might not be necessary to go very fully into the machine question at all, either through you or succeeding witnesses, and therefore if Mr. Walker or Mr. Bell are going to direct their evidence to some extent to that question, would you wish also to give any evidence upon it?—I do not know that I need occupy the time of the Commission in this matter.

1366. We wish to give you the opportunity if you think it desirable?—I do not think that it is necessary.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

1367. I understand that the Mine Owners' Association represents eight firms and 19 mines?—Yes.

1368. How many mines are there in the whole district?—There are 31 returned in the Government inspector's report for last year.

1369. But your 19 mines are returned as 24 or 25?—Yes.

1370. So that taking the inspector's report in each case there are only some five or six mines outside the Association?—That is so.

1371. What is the proportion of persons employed at the associated mines as compared with those in the whole district?—About 83 per cent. are at the associated mines.

1372. Have you found any difficulty in consequence of the Association not embracing the whole of the mines. Has that been productive of disputes between the employers and employed in the district?—The associated mines, I might say are in a somewhat circumscribed area; the non-associated mines are situated at a distance from our circle of mines.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

1373. When a dispute arises in a non-associated mine how is it settled?—I have known several disputes connected with the non-associated mines to be settled by managers from the associated mines.

1374. So that the methods of settlement adopted by the Joint Committee are to some extent operative in the non-associated mines also?—Quite so.

1375. The Joint Committee really sets the example for the whole district?—It sets the example and does the work for the whole district.

1376. This Joint Committee seems to have been extraordinarily successful in the Cleveland district in preventing disputes. I should say from the evidence given before us that it has been very much more successful than the corresponding institution in the Durham coal industry. Could you account for that difference?—Well, perhaps in one way it may be accounted for by the fact that we are a smaller district. There has been a continuity of officials on the employers' side as well as on the men's side in Cleveland which I think has also much to do with the successful operation of this Committee. I cannot say that I am versed in the difference between the success of Cleveland district as compared with that of Durham.

1377. Complaints were made in the case of the Durham coal-field that the Committee was overburdened with work. That has never been the case with the Cleveland district, I judge, from the comparatively smaller number of meetings that you have held?—If there were questions that ought to be settled we come to an understanding that the men shall not suffer by little delays. We occasionally have what we term a field day—a long sitting, more than three hours even, so as to dispose of considerable arrears, but it is understood by the men if they have expected a matter to be settled earlier that they should receive their back money as if it were settled at the date that the dispute arose.

1378. Your decisions are retrospective then?—We can make them so.

1379. And you generally do make them so?—I would not say that we generally make them so, because we generally call a meeting when it is necessary.

1380. Your Committee takes cognizance of cases of dismissal, does it not, where a definite cause of dismissal has been assigned?—We have had cases before the Joint Committee where men have thought they were wrongly dismissed. We take cognizance of anything that is likely to lead to trouble, and which we can avoid by so taking cognizance.

1381. You would not immediately dismiss a case where a man had been discharged on the ground that it was not competent for the Committee to examine such cases?—We should look into any matter that might come before us before deciding whether it was such as ought not to have come or should have come before us.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

1382. Have cases of what were called "sacrificed men" come before you?—We know nothing of "sacrificed men" in Cleveland.

1383. There are no "sacrificed men" there?—There are no "sacrificed men" in Cleveland.

1384. It is your practice to take cognizance, under certain circumstances, of cases of dismissal. Have you found that this impairs discipline at the mines—that it makes it more difficult for the managers to control their men?—I cannot remember a case that I could speak about bearing upon the point.

Mr. *Burt.*

1385. As between Durham and Cleveland, there is a very great difference in the number of people employed, and perhaps also in the diversity of the conditions of employment?—No doubt the Durham district is very much larger than the Cleveland district.

1386. So that any difficulty in arranging disputes in Durham at the Joint Committee might be due in a very large measure to the difference of circumstances and conditions in the Durham coal-field?—Yes, to the circumstances and conditions as you say.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

1387. With regard to the questions that are referred to mine owners and representatives of the men, I suppose they will be referred to persons who are not interested in the particular mine at which the dispute is pending?—Quite so.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

1388. You said that you had not often had occasion to call in an umpire. When he has been called in has his award been accepted?—Except in one instance, which has occurred within the 10 years from 1881 to 1890: we had one case—a local case—it was not a general district case, and the local reference resulted in certain alterations of rates which the men did not accept. That award was slightly amended and the strike which occurred only lasted some four days.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. HUGH BELL called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

1389. You are a member of the firm of Bell, Brothers, Limited, of Middlesbrough, mine owners and iron-masters?—I am.

1390. Over how many years does your acquaintance with the Cleveland ironstone mining district extend?—Since 1862.

1391. Your firm are members of the Cleveland Mine Owners' Association?—Yes, ever since its formation.

1392. You are intimately acquainted with the Association's affairs?—Yes, I am well acquainted with them. My father, Sir Lowthian Bell, is the President of the Association, but in his absence I usually represent the firm of Bell, Brothers, at its meetings.

1393. How many ironstone mines have your firm in the Cleveland district?—Five.

1394. What proportion of the Cleveland ironstone is won by your firm?—Our output may be roughly taken at a million, rather under than over a million tons; or about one-sixth of the output of the whole district and one-fifth of the output of the associated mines.

1395. How, in your opinion, is arbitration generally viewed by the Cleveland mine owners as a means of settling wages disputes?—For purposes of smaller matters I think we may say that we regard it as a satisfactory mode of settlement; but when it comes to larger or district questions where important principles are involved we always feel some apprehension lest the person selected to act for us should not quite understand the bearings of the subject. But we have always been extremly ready to submit any questions to arbitration, our desire being as far as possible to ventilate any matter which may arise between us and men in our employment in

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

that full and frank and open way in which it can alone be done before a competent court of arbitration.

1396. Have you ever had any general district arbitrations, and have these taken place within the last ten years?—Within the past ten years none, the sliding scale having regulated wages during the whole of that time or most part of this time. Before that we had four arbitrations, and since the termination of the sliding scale our wages have been arranged by conference between the masters and the men.

1397. Have the employers occasion to be satisfied with the result of these general arbitrations?—We were fairly satisfied.

1398. Were the awards loyally accepted on both sides?—Oh yes.

1399. Are the men less willing than the employers to submit a general district wages question to arbitration?—One can only tell you what they say. They themselves say that their experience of arbitration is not satisfactory, the awards having generally gone against them.

1400. What was the nature of the four general wages arbitrations to which you have referred?—One was an application by the men for an advance, which they did not obtain; the other three were applications for reductions on the part of the masters in which a considerable portion of the owners' demands were granted.

1401. Is it to be presumed that these last three arbitrations took place when trade was receding?—Yes, they did.

1402. Has there never been a general district arbitration which has resulted in an advance?—No, there has never been an arbitration which has resulted in an advance, the owners having

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

always conceded such advances as satisfied the men before it became necessary to proceed to arbitration.

1403. This seems to give no chance of arbitration being very popular with the men employed in Cleveland?—No, it is obvious that if the master always can see that the arbitration would result in an advance the men will never be satisfied with an arbitration, because an arbitration can never result in anything but a reduction.

1404. Whom have you had as arbitrators?—We have had Sir Rupert Kettle on two occasions, in 1873 and 1875, and he was sole arbitrator on these two occasions. Serjeant Wheeler was arbitrator in 1876, and Sir James FitzJames Stephen was umpire in 1877.

1405. As you have had little experience with regard to local arbitrations, and none in general, arbitrations of awards not being abided by, you have perhaps never contemplated how such a case should be met should it arise?—Well, on the whole our experience in Cleveland has been so satisfactory as to the way in which both the masters and the men have carried out the bargain, that really we have not had much occasion to consider the question. If it were possible to impose some financial liability upon the one side and the other, upon the masters and the men, carrying with it an obligation to pay money for a breach of a bargain of that kind, perhaps it might be a desirable way of dealing with the question. At the same time I am loth to restrain by legislation or otherwise, except by the action of public opinion, the operation of our relations with one another, that one hesitates to express any opinion in favour of a financial obligation which would be recoverable at law. One would like to feel if the bargain were not carried out that the men's Association would voluntarily be prepared to pay, and we should be ready to pay on our side if we failed to carry out our bargain.

1406. That would be applicable to local arbitrations alone?—Yes, of course when it becomes the question of a very large difference of opinion that can only be got over by negotiation, by the higgling of the market between the person who offers the employment and the person who takes it; and, in the last resource, what I see Mr. Toyn described as a "cessation of labour."

1407. Which method of settling wages do you prefer of the following three:—By sliding scales, by arbitration, or by conference with the men's representatives at short intervals?—It is obvious that the employer would much prefer a sliding scale which settles the matter for a considerable period and leaves his mind free to deal with other matters, and takes it away from the very troublesome negotiations which the other two ways of settling wages involve. Since our sliding scale came to an end in June 1889, which is two years ago, we have had eight arrangements of rates of wages, that is to say, every three months, on the average, we have been called upon to meet our men with a

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

view to determine what the rate of wages should be. Those meetings are very often long drawn out, they occupy a considerable number of days; I mean to say a meeting takes place, and an adjournment is necessary, and the men have to consult their constituents and come back, and another afternoon, or even more than that, is spent in negotiating a settlement. In the end it only lasts for a few weeks—three months is the average time. That imposes upon a man engaged in a large business so large a call upon his time as to be extremely inconvenient. Arbitration has the same, or even a greater drawback; it takes a longer time, though it may result in a more permanent settlement. There remains the sliding scale. Now, the sliding scale, assuming its basis to be a reasonable one (and to the settlement of that the employers and the men, I am quite sure, would be willing to devote their time), once settled, determines the rates of wages for a more prolonged period. We have been accustomed for a settlement to last for a year or 18 months or even two years, and therefore our unhesitating vote is in favour of the sliding scale.

1408. Why was the sliding scale terminated?—The sliding scale was terminated at the instance of the men's Association. They gave notice of their desire to put an end to it, and I understood them to object on the grounds that it did not reflect sufficiently quickly the upward movements of the market, and did not give the men sufficiently large advances. The second reason is an objection to the basis. The first reason is an objection to the principle upon which that particular scale was based, or it may possibly be an objection to all scales.

1409. Could you briefly describe the scale?—The sliding scale we had in Cleveland was based on the assumption that the wages in the Cleveland mines would, on the whole, follow the price of Cleveland pig-iron, and it contained a provision for ascertaining the price of iron each quarter. The price so ascertained regulated the wages for the succeeding three months, that is to say, a given price of pig-iron yielded to the miners a given tonnage rate, and to the day men a given day's wage, and a lesser price of pig-iron a smaller tonnage and day's wage, and *vice versâ*. I might explain in a word or two why I have to mention pig-iron and not ironstone. In point of fact, two of the largest firms in Cleveland, my own and Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan, & Co., in the main consume the whole of their output. The firm of Messrs. Pease Partners, who are the third very large producers of ironstone, are indeed sellers, but so large a proportion of the output of the mines goes directly to consumers who raise the stone, that it would be impossible, I think, to find any real basis of value in ironstone; it always has to be converted into pig-iron. It is different from coal. You can take coal as the basis, because coal is a commodity which goes into hundreds of uses, whereas ironstone only goes to one use, that of making iron, and it is not

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

unnatural that the value of the minerals should be determined by the value of the first product of smelting pig-iron; and that is why I have to speak of iron and not of ironstone in giving the outline of the basis of the scale.

1410. It would be perhaps convenient if you were able to tell us how the standard rate and the gradations were arrived at?—In 1879 we had come through a very troubled time in the iron trade. We had had the high prices in the earlier part of the seventies, and then the rapid fall which ensued. As you will have noticed, all our arbitrations took place in the period in question, from 1873 to 1877, and these troubles with our men made us disposed to look for some other way of settling wages; and a sliding scale, which was already in vogue in other industries, suggested itself. We then endeavoured to ascertain, those of us who had access to the price of pig-iron (because at that time there was no sliding scale ascertainment), what rate of wages had, in fact, been coincident with what prices of pig-iron.

1411. For a long antecedent period?—For a period of over 10 years—certainly of 10 years, and I think of longer than that. It certainly took in the whole of the great fluctuations of the seventies, and I think it went to an earlier date than that. Having ascertained what wages had actually coincided with what price of pig-iron, we began to negotiate with the men upon that basis. I am quite ready to admit that the men were obliged to negotiate at a disadvantage, because they had only the quoted prices in the newspapers, whereas we had the actual results in our books; but I think the leaders of the men and the men themselves at that time trusted fairly to the accuracy of any statements that we made, and did fairly accept the truth of what we laid before them. As a result of that negotiation a scale was settled which practically gave effect (by the agreement between the parties) to what had in reality taken place in the past. As a matter of fact the men got an advantage. We gave them a scale which, had it been in operation in the preceding 10 years, would have produced a somewhat higher rate of wages.

1412. The wages of such preceding 10 years having been settled in various modes, probably, negotiation, arbitration, or possibly strike?—Yes, all of those modes of settling wages had taken place in the past 10 years.

1413. If the first scale so established in 1879 had been in operation for the preceding 10 years say, or about that period, it would, as you say, have given a slightly higher wage on the average during that period than had resulted from these various modes of arriving at the rate of wages?—Yes, somewhat higher wages.

1414. Do you think the men are justified in their objections to the scale?—No, I do not think they are.

1415. I mean justified from their own point of view?—No. Quite frankly I say to this Committee, as I say to the men, that I think, on the whole, overtime, with the scale, had it

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

existed now, would give the men better wages than they get without it.

1416. You have no doubt seen the printed questions issued by this Commission to Employers' Associations, and no doubt you have been a party to the very full and clear replies that have been given by your Association to those printed questions. I do not therefore think it is necessary to take you through them, but I will just ask you before your examination-in-chief closes whether there is any other point that you would like to offer observation upon?—No, I do not think there is any question that I should desire to offer any further observations upon. There are matters in connexion with the scale, but they lead one so far afield that really I hesitate about going into them. The men's objections to the scale I have mentioned, and one feels perhaps that this is an opportunity of answering as far as it may be possible the objections the men have made to the scale. One of the objections, as I have mentioned, is that the scale does not sufficiently rapidly respond to changes in price, particularly to upward changes in price. Now, it appears to me that that is in the nature of things, and that it is impossible that any scale shall ever respond, and that indeed rates of wages shall ever follow with anything like parallelism the rising price, particularly in its higher ranges, and that on the other hand it is almost sure that wages will descend to the lower levels of price; in point of fact it is a truism to say that the top price is only got for a very small quantity. It is in the nature of things that it should only be got for a very small quantity, and, therefore, the top price cannot be reflected to a large extent in that out of which the owners alone can pay wages, viz., the returns they get for the materials they sell. That is an objection which the men raise to the scale, and as long as they continue to hold that objection and as long as we do not succeed in convincing them that it is one which is based on a mistaken view, one's hopes of the establishment of a scale permanently must be very small, and one would like to have the opportunity — one likes to seize any opportunity that presents itself—of showing how impossible it is that the prices obtained by the manufacturer for his product can reflect with anything like accuracy the top prices obtained for the article. That is putting in very general terms and without illustrations what I believe to be the inherent objection of the men to the scale, and an objection which (till they waive it) makes the difficulty of establishing scales well-nigh insuperable.

1417. It was suggested when Mr. Toyn, I think, was under examination, that the Cleveland Mine Owners' Association might be able to put in a statement in such a form as might be found convenient, showing the difference between the quoted prices and the realised prices of pig-iron over a term of years?—We have prepared, and I have now in my hand a paper in the form of a diagram. There are some people who object to these pictorial representations, and in order to

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

avoid that objection we have added also the figures to the pictures, so that you not only have the chain of mountains but you also have the heights quoted. This figure is a diagram showing the average quarterly quotations and the prices actually realised for No. 3 pig-iron from 1879 to 1891. I shall be glad to put that in (*handing in documents*).

1418. I see there is a memorandum appended, "During 47 quarters, 11¾ years, the quoted "prices have been higher than the ascertained "prices in 25 of those quarters, and the "ascertained prices have been higher than the "quoted prices in 21 of those quarters. One "quarter the quoted and ascertained prices were "the same." Then it further adds, "the average quotation," by which I understand newspaper quotation or a quotation in a trade journal of some sort?—Yes.

1419. "The average quotation for 11¾ years, "38*s.* 10*d.*; the realisation for that period, "37*s.* 8*d.*" On the other hand, I suppose the diagram shows that prices have occasionally run up very much higher than the ascertainment even for the period which included that run up?—Yes. That is just what I have been saying, I believe to be in the nature of things. This, I think, may be taken as a typical diagram of the relation between quoted prices and realised prices. In the first place, it is on the whole a period of very considerable depression in general prices. It has, however, two marked rises in price, the rise in 1880 and the rise in 1889. The rise in 1880 was an extremely rapid rise and of very short duration, and it will be seen that in that rise the iron-master was not able to get anywhere near the quoted price by the realised price. The top price was 63*s.*, the average for the quarter was 58*s.* 11*d.*; the iron-master only obtained 42*s.* 8*d.* The rise came with such rapidity and was over so quickly that there was only the very mildest reflection of it in the realised price. On the other hand, the very rapidity of the rise and the subsequent rapidity of the fall enabled the iron-master in the succeeding quarter, the second quarter of 1882, to realise 42*s.* 4*d.* when the price had gone to 40*s.* 2*d.* That, I think, is a typical illustration of what takes place in a rising and excited market. Then, if you follow the line, you will see that during the depressed years of 1880, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, the two lines got exceedingly close together, the iron-master gets a little more or a little less as the case may be, but the two lines approach one another very closely indeed. There is a slight improvement in 1887, and then there is the remarkable improvement in 1889, when we hoped that the experience of the seventies was going to be repeated, and when it was repeated to the extent of pig-iron rising to 68*s.*, the rise was much slower, as gentlemen will observe. It began in the middle of 1888, and it continued until the latter part of 1889. It enabled the iron-master to realise by his sales a large proportion of the rise, and the result was that after the price had risen to 68*s.*, in the following quarter the iron-master succeeded in

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

getting 52*s.* There again, I venture to think, is a typical illustration of what must inevitably be the relation between quoted price and realised price in such a trade as the iron trade.

Sir *Edward Harland.*

1420. I suppose the dotted line is the quoted price and the dark line is the realised price?—That is so.

Mr. *Dale.*

1421. The importance of your evidence on this point and the value of the illustrated diagram I suppose lies in the following proposition: that in your opinion the sliding scale is one of the most useful modes of preventing disputes upon the question of general wages in any industry?—That is so.

1422. And that several trades which have had these sliding scales and abolished them have so lost what you think was the benefit of the scale, and that their abolition by the men in Cleveland has been owing to a disappointment arising largely from the ascertained prices frequently falling considerably short of what may have been the quoted prices of the standard commodity?—That is so; and I have pointed out to the Committee my reasons for believing that that is inherent in the nature of things—that it is inevitable.

1423. Of course it might be said why not take the quoted prices instead of the ascertained prices. What would be your answer to that?—My answer to that would be that the iron-master and the mine owner can only pay what he receives. The fund out of which he is going to pay his wages comes from what he has sold his commodity for. Somebody has been fortunate enough to sell pig-iron at, we will say, 68*s.*, but the average price is only 52*s.*; it is clear that if the whole of the trade are called upon to pay after the rate of 68*s.*, it might mean ruin, and would mean a serious disadvantage.

1424. That is to say that although the difference between the quoted price and the ascertained price for a series of years, as shown in the memorandum which I have read, is not very great—it does not take any account of quantity I presume?—There is no account taken of quantity in the quoted prices.

1425. But the ascertained price takes account of the actual quantity and of all the prices entering into the ascertainments?—That is so.

1426. But in the quoted prices there is no quantity given or available?—That is so; there is no quantity available; you are unable to say what the quantity is. The sale at 68*s.* may have been 10 tons, done at the moment of excitement on the Glasgow Exchange. The deliveries at 52*s.*, were (we know) the many thousand tons of Cleveland iron which during that quarter had been delivered to consumers. Perhaps I ought to have explained before dealing with this diagram, that this is not a question of quotations

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

made nor even of sales made, but of actual deliveries.

1427. The ascertainment?—The ascertainment is not quotations nor even sales, but actual deliveries. In point of fact, if you multiply by 52*s.* the quantity of Cleveland No. 3 pig-iron made or delivered, if the stocks do not very greatly vary in the quarter of the year to which it refers, you get the revenue of the Cleveland iron-master for pig-iron for that quarter—the actual receipts which he puts into his bank.

1428. Perhaps you will describe a little more fully the manner in which, when the sliding scale was in existence, the average price for each three months was got—by whom and in what manner?—There were appointed by the parties to the scale accountants who made an examination of the books of, I think, eight of the largest firms in Cleveland, and who certified that the average prices of No. 3 pig-iron for the preceding quarter had amounted to so-and-so, as a result of that examination.

1429. On the quantity of Cleveland pig-iron which had been actually delivered during that period of ascertainment by the representative firms to their customers?—Yes.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

1430. I think you are not only an owner of mines in Cleveland but also of coal mines in Durham?—Yes.

1431. Perhaps then you can answer some questions which I was preparing to put to Mr. Dennington?—I will endeavour to do so if I can.

1432. It appears from the evidence given before us that the Cleveland Mine Owners' Association has been more successful in maintaining harmonious relations with the men than the Durham Mine Owners' Association. I should like to know if in your opinion that is due to any difference in the constitution of the Joint Committees?—No, I should think not to a difference in the constitution of the Joint Committees. You see the Cleveland Mine Owners' Association is an extremely compact body. You have been told that there are only a small number of firms in it, that there are, comparatively speaking, a small number of mines in it. It so happens that there are three very large firms, Messrs. Pease Partners, Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan, and Company, and my own firm. Accordingly you have a homogeneousness which it is difficult to conceive in a larger industry, and I think Mr. Dennington was quite right in the answers he gave you on that head, that the continuity of the action of the Joint Committee on the masters' side has tended to relations of a more satisfactory kind being maintained. A smaller body dealt more easily with its men than a larger body. On the contrary, as to the coal mines in Durham, you have again Messrs. Pease Partners, Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan, and Company, the Consett Iron Company, the Weardale Iron Company, and one or two others. There are no three firms together who have a

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

preponderating influence such as the three firms I have mentioned in Cleveland.

1433. The fact that the Cleveland mining district is smaller, and that the mines are owned by a smaller number of owners produces in fact a superior form of organisation—greater unity of action?—Yes, a much greater community of interest also.

1434. Are the conditions of the different mines in Durham more divergent than the conditions of the different mines in Cleveland?—Infinitely more divergent. In the first place there are at least two, if not three, quite distinct qualities of the coal mined in the county of Durham—no doubt you have had this before you already. You have in the southern and western parts of the county a great coke-producing district; you have in other portions of the county gas-coal collieries; and then a third category of coal pits, the house-coal collieries. The interests of the owners of these three different classes of pits may be quite different. The iron trade may be extremely good, when the house-coal trade may be very bad; that has occurred before now; and the iron-master who is represented in the Coal Trade Association may be ready to make any sacrifice rather than have a cessation of labour, while the house-coal producer may be quite in a different position. You get a divergence of interest which is inevitably reflected in the deliberations of any body of owners representing those interests; and the same of course is true of the miner.

1435. Then you attribute the better relations in Cleveland between masters and men neither to superiority of constitution of the Joint Committee nor to greater goodwill and desire of harmony on the part of either masters or men, but simply to the inherent difficulties of the case in Durham as compared with Cleveland?—I think that is in a large measure the case. You know you are getting on very delicate ground. It would be difficult for me to say that I thought that the Durham masters or the Durham men were less prudent in the way of dealing with the matters which arise than Cleveland. I am both Cleveland and Durham, and I should go back to the North with a very unfortunate character if in this room I had said that the Durham miners were less reasonable than the Cleveland miners, or that the Durham masters were less reasonable than the Cleveland masters.

1436. I do not wish to ask you an indiscreet question, nor should I have put it exactly in that form if I had not been prepared for the answer you have just given—that in your opinion there was no such distinction to be drawn. What I am really driving at is this: I desire to know whether in your opinion in the matter of arrangements between masters and men in Cleveland there is anything from which a lesson might be learned for Durham?—Yes, I think Durham might well learn a lesson, and the lesson which Durham should learn would be so to conduct its affairs as not to have the difficulties which arise there which do not arise in Cleve-

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

land; but then, you see, I have begged the question.

1437. You have begged the question unless those difficulties are inherent and impossible to get over by any organisation or any arrangement of the relations between the men and the masters. It was just to that point that I was directing my questions?—My impression is that the Durham coal trade is so much more complicated—the conditions of the trade are so much more complicated - in a word, it would take very much better handling to manage Durham as well as Cleveland is managed.

1438. That is all I wanted to know. It is the inherent difficulties that produce the difference between the two districts in respect of the relations between employers and employed?—I think in a very large measure.

1439. Now, with regard to the sliding scale: the basis of the sliding scale rests entirely upon the price of Cleveland pig-iron No. 3?—Yes.

1440. It takes no account whatever of other matters, the conditions of the labour market, for instance?—No, no account.

1441. Between 1879, when I think the sliding scale was instituted, and 1889, when it was finally abandoned, there were several changes made in the sliding scale itself?—Yes.

1442. Did the necessity for revising the sliding scale arise from the fact that such matters as the condition of the labour market were not taken into consideration in fixing the basis originally?—I do not think you can say that explicitly—not explicitly—that was not a reason assigned. The dissatisfaction of the men with the sliding scale began to be shown at a very early stage in its existence, and each successive sliding scale slightly improved the scale for the men. For example, I think I am right in saying that it was in a subsequent and not in the first sliding scale that we inserted what we call the double jump, that is to say, the step was made twice as high for the same price of iron; it was in a subsequent sliding scale that at the instance of the men we made the gradations exceedingly small, so that practically it was no longer a scale, but it was an incline; there were no steps in it, the gradations were so small. Those changes cannot be said to have been coincident with any change in the labour market, and were certainly not asked for on the ground of a change in the conditions of the labour market. At the same time perhaps you will allow me to interpose an observation which arises out of your question, and that is this: that I do not think a sliding scale could be fixed for 10 years.

1443. That is exactly what I was going to ask?—No.

1444. Any attempt to fix a sliding scale for a period as long as that would fail in consequence of the fact that there are many considerations which have to be taken account of, and which could not be taken account of in a sliding scale merely based upon the price of pig-iron?—Certainly. If you ask whether I think a sliding scale such as I have described has any logical basis, I should say it has not. The best you can say for it is that it is a very good haphazard way, and if it is kept under revision and not made for too long a period, and the parties to it are ready to accept the changes which must be brought about over comparatively short periods, say two or three years at the outside, that is not a bad way of settling wages, but to provide by Act of Parliament, we will say, that the price to be paid for labour should always be so much per cent. of the price to be got for pig-iron, would be to make it quite sure that the Act of Parliament would not be effective.

1445. If the system of sliding scales was in operation, still the particular sliding scale would certainly require revision, probably every two or three years?—Yes, I should say so. At this very moment the difficulty is rather disappearing, but certainly a few months ago there was a disturbance of the most serious kind in the relations between the value of fuel going to make a ton of pig-iron and that ton of pig-iron. Now, supposing that proved to be persistent, and with our exhausting coal-fields, we must look probably to a very great change in the value of fuel, it would have been necessary to revise the pig-iron sliding scale, because the items going to produce a ton of pig-iron would have varied in relation to one another; that is a case in point.

1446. That is a case where the price of material would have interfered with the basis of the sliding scale?—Exactly. Then let me take another example. We have spoken of No. 3 pig-iron. Supposing circumstances arose by which the relations of the qualities of iron were seriously to alter, and either No. 3 were to become much less valuable than the other numbers, or much more valuable, it is obvious that it would be necessary again to revise the scale Then your own question indicates a third possibility, and that is that the remuneration of labour itself, another ingredient in the price of pig-iron, might have seriously changed. The operative might be entitled to a larger or a smaller per-centage.

1447. In consequence of the particular condition of the labour market at the time?—Yes, or perhaps there might arise some permanent change, say, in the cost of living. The country might become protectionist.

1448. The sliding scale, however, might be expected roughly to follow the changes in the labour market, inasmuch as when the price of iron was high the probability is that there would be a larger demand for the labour of the miners?—Yes, it is on that very rough and ready assumption that the sliding scale is based.

1449. Now to come to the objections of the men. I did not quite follow what you said in answer to the Chairman on the subject of the sensitiveness of the scale. When Mr. Toyn and Mr. Strong were examined here the other day I did not gather that their objection arose from a difference between the quoted prices and the ascertained prices. I thought it rather was that when the price of iron was rising the rise of wages did not follow sufficiently quickly?—I have only read very generally the evidence

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

they gave, but my impression is that I have rightly interpreted the view that they have very often expressed to us. Their frequently expressed objection to us has been that whereas they saw, say, 66*s.* quoted in the newspapers, they only found (I am instancing a specific case) 45*s.* realised over the quarter.

1450. But Mr. Strong gave it as his opinion that the wages of the miners in the Cleveland district were lower than they should be in consequence of the gambling propensities of the trade?—That is an opinion about which a great deal may be said. I may be heterodox in my view, but I do not see how operations on the Scotch Stock Exchange, the Scotch pig-iron market, are going to affect the value of pig-iron. What I get for my iron is what somebody is willing to give me, not upon a piece of paper, but in order to take it away and make it into a pipe or a rail.

1451. I quite agree, and indeed am puzzled by this difficulty. Have you really been unable to persuade the men that the wages which they receive should depend upon the prices that the iron-masters get instead of the prices which speculators get?—Have we been unable to persuade the men?

1452. Yes?—We have had a great deal of difficulty in persuading a much more august body—the House of Commons. The House of Commons has had under consideration a Bill to prohibit these operations which they say are so detrimental to the trade.

1453. Which operations are you speaking of?—The operations on the Scotch Stock Exchange.

1454. I think you rather misunderstood my question. I asked whether you had had any difficulty in persuading the men that the wages which you pay them should depend, not upon the gambling prices obtained by speculators in iron on the Stock Exchange, but upon the prices which you yourselves actually obtained, which are the ascertained prices?—I do not think there is any difficulty in persuading their reasons on that point. I think there is some difficulty in persuading their imaginations and their hearts. When I am face to face with Mr. Toyn and Mr. Strong they admit the force of the argument. They recognise that all the iron-master or the mine owner can pay is out of the proceeds of his pig-iron; but when they see pig-iron quoted at 66*s.* and they are asked to receive a wage based upon its price at 45*s.* they are discontented. I confess I am not surprised. I do not think it is unreasonable.

1455. Then you think it is the heart and imagination of the men that stand in the way of the establishment of a sliding scale, not their reason?—In that respect I think so. The thing seems to me to be so obvious as hardly to admit of argument. At the same time, Mr. Strong and Mr. Toyn have behind them a large body of persons not very familiar with the operations of trade whom they have to persuade, and I am not surprised. I do not think it the least reasonable, but I am not surprised that they should have some difficulty in persuading those men that when they see iron quoted at 66*s.* it is unreasonable that the iron-master should be only receiving 45*s.* I am speaking, you know, always from the table.

1456. I think you said that you believed that if the scale was still in existence at the present time it would have been somewhat to the advantage of the men—it would have given the men somewhat higher wages than they are receiving at the present time?—What I did say was this: I believe that over a period the men would be advantaged by having a scale; that they would get better wages over a period by having a scale. Your question is addressed to the immediate past, I understand.

1457. Yes, the immediate past—the past two years—since wages have been fixed by negotiation?—The last two years are coincidental with the rapid rise in the price of iron. Of course in a rising market and in an excited market the producer is very loth to do anything which will lead to a cessation of his production, and he will make concessions for peace's sake which in a falling market he would not make; so that it is quite conceivable that by abandoning the scale at the moment of the rise the men should get more, and that then by taking it up again at the moment of a fall they should again get more. My proposition would still be true generally.

1458. I understand; but I thought you applied it to the last few years?—No, I applied it over a period, I think.

1459. The scale would have operated unfavourably instead of favourably with a rising market?—A rapidly rising and somewhat excited market.

1460. And in a falling market exactly the reverse would take place?—Yes, I believe so, if you take a sufficiently long period, subject, of course, to revisions and objections to the scale which could be met by reasonable negotiation the scale would be productive of better wages to the men than the absence of the scale.

Mr. *Burt.*

1461. I do not want to follow the comparison between Durham and Cleveland after the questions Mr. Balfour has put to you, but may I ask if you are a member of the Joint Committee in Durham?—No, I am not.

1462. I daresay you are aware that it has been given in evidence by the representatives of the Durham miners that the Joint Committee in that county is greatly overburdened with work, that it takes a considerable time to overtake the cases that are presented to it?—Yes, I believe that is so. I believe that is a complaint.

1463. And that very often the disputes happen through the impatience of the workmen in having differences that may have been pending for several weeks postponed again for several weeks further?—Yes, I have no doubt that is the case.

1464. Although on both sides, as regards the representatives of the workmen and the employers, it may be said that they are all

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

exceedingly busy men, would it not be a lesser evil to increase the number of meetings greatly in order to overtake the business?—Yes, if the cases continued to be so numerous. I think any tribunal of that kind ought to be rather regarded as a last resort. I think that the Durham owners, and the miners too, make a mistake in having so many Joint Committee cases. It would be better if they sought to adjust, without the intervention of the machinery of a court, their differences, and the mistake which is made in Durham is that too many cases are allowed to go to the Joint Committee by both the one side and the other. It is exactly like people in business. An unreasonable man—I am not going to prejudice the question by saying unreasonable—but some men permit all their disputes to be settled by the courts. Other men succeed in settling them all outside the courts. Now I think in Durham the tendency is rather too much to refer to the tribunal, and I think that masters and men would be better advised if they endeavoured rather to lessen the number of cases which must go to the Joint Committee than to increase them or to let them continue as numerous as they are. I can only speak for my own firm and say that if you had a return of the Joint Committee cases you would I think find a very small number of them coming from our collieries.

1465. I am not giving evidence, but I entirely agree with you on that point; but may I infer from your answer that if the number of meetings is increased you are afraid that the number of cases will go on increasing in proportion?—I should rather be inclined to think that there would be a tendency in that direction.

1466. But it is a great evil to have cases pending; even very small cases sometimes cause a great deal of irritation and excitement?—Quite so.

1467. And it is certainly in itself a very great evil you would say to have cases, however trivial, pending for a long period of ever so many weeks?—I entirely agree. That, like every other tribunal, had better get rid of its business as rapidly as possible. The remedy, I venture to think, and I am glad to find that so eminent an authority as yourself agrees with me, lies in not filing the cases.

1468. You said that your arbitrations had all been loyally accepted on both sides?—Yes, I think so.

1469. But you have not had I understand within the last 10 years any general arbitrations?—No.

1470. And I suppose that statement in regard to the loyal acceptance by both sides would apply also to the decisions of the Joint Committee in Cleveland?—Yes, on the whole.

1471. Then with regard to the four cases of arbitration you mentioned, I think that they had all gone against the workmen and that probably had some effect in prejudicing their minds against the system of arbitration?—Yes, I think it is conceivable.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

1472. They applied in one case for an advance of wages. In the other three cases the demands were for reductions. In the latter case the demands were made in a falling market, and reductions to a smaller or greater extent were awarded by the umpire. Is not that so?—Yes.

1473. In the case of the advance that was asked by the workmen, was that asked in a rising or a falling market?—The application in question which the men made for an advance, which they did not obtain, was made at a moment when the price of pig-iron was exceedingly high; it so happened that it was just the very top point, I believe, and was about to come down, though of course no one knew of that, and at that time the determination of the arbitrator was that no advance could properly be given. No doubt what was in his mind, though he probably did not express it, was precisely what I said in reply to Mr. Balfour, that it was impossible to let the rates of wages reflect the very top price of pig-iron. Therefore the arbitrator at that time determined that it was not desirable in the general interests of the trade —and I think the award was almost in those terms—to concede any advance of wages. That I think answers your question.

1474. You expressed an opinion, you did not put it very emphatically, in favour of the imposition of a fine in cases where either employers or workmen refused to abide by the decision of an umpire, but you would not mean by Act of Parliament, I suppose, or any arrangement or that kind?—No. I should not like to have an Act of Parliament interfering with it.

1475. And really in Cleveland you have had no necessity for anything of the kind. The workmen have always accepted the decisions? —You may say they have accepted the decisions so generally that really the exceptions prove the rule. There have been cases where there has been a little ebullition for a short time; for a few days there has been a cessation of labour, but then the leaders of the men have reasoned with their constituents. We have been patient, and the difficulty has blown over.

1476. Then with regard to the sliding scale, I daresay you are aware that it has been given in evidence that if the last sliding scale had been in existence the workmen would have had a lower wage than they have at the present time by about 3 per cent. or something like that?—Yes. I was careful in answering Mr. Balfour to provide for that question being put to me.

1477. You have carefully explained it. Your statement that the sliding scale would give higher wages had reference to over a lengthened period?—Yes.

1478. It has been urged by the opponents of sliding scales—I am not one—that their tendency is to keep down prices; even those who do not contest the principle, who admit the accuracy of the figures and so on, contend that the tendency is to keep down prices—that employers are less eager to get the best price they can obtain when

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

a sliding scale is in existence than they are at other times. Do you think there is any validity in that contention?—None whatever. The ideal sliding scale would produce for the men working under it rather better wages than they were entitled to at its lower end, in return for rather smaller wages at its higher end. The result of that is that it is the interest of every party to keep up prices; the man, the employer, the merchant, and everybody wants prices up; the man wants them up because he gets better wages; the master wants them up because he gets more profits. That is the principle upon which we go, without being aware of it. We sell our commodity, whatever it may be, at the lower ranges of price much nearer to the cost of production than we do at the higher ranges. In fact, the cost of production does not increase as rapidly as the price at which the article is sold; and if a sliding scale is well considered it should have that effect. I admit that the contention that I have heard put forward, and which you are now giving voice to, is an extremely ingenious one, and does very great credit to the perspicacity of the people who found it out; and it justifies one in saying that there is no difference in mother-wit between the one side of the table, the masters, and the other side of the table, the miners, at a joint committee. This is an example of it; but I think that it is not correct; it is ingenious but it is not correct.

1479. I think you said, in answer to Mr. Balfour, that there are (and of course we all know that there are) other factors which determine wages besides the rise and fall in the price of material. Now, in a rising market is it not often the case that there is a greater demand for labour, and that the workmen therefore have the advantage of that increased demand, and sometimes a scarcity of workmen, and in that way the men might be able to get a higher wage than a sliding scale would give them?—Yes, I think I have already admitted that in saying that no doubt in the rising market you can squeeze more out of the master than a sliding scale would give.

Mr. *Dale.*

1480. Is not the sliding scale an attempt to express that?—Yes, I think it is; but in the falling market the master squeezes more out of the men.

Mr. *Burt.*

1481. I suppose you would say that the employer in the falling market would have the advantage of being able to enforce a lower wage than the prices might in themselves justify?—Certainly.

1482. So that the one would balance the other?—When labour is plentiful the master crushes the workman; when labour is scarce the workman crushes the master.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

1483. You think it rather an advantage to the workmen that the drag should be put on on both sides?—I think it is better for both parties. I think it very much sweetens their relations. It is not done because we like it. One has often occasion to say, we much prefer paying high wages to paying lower ones; it is much more agreeable to us.

Mr. *Burt.*

1484. While the sliding scale was in existence, your method of procedure was to appoint accountants on both sides?—Yes.

1485. May I ask if the mine owners on their side have continued the system?—Yes, the sliding scale is still in existence.

1486. So far as that is concerned?—No; in this way. The railway rates, the rates of carriage, are settled to some extent by the fluctuations of the price of pig-iron; and the wages of the blast-furnacemen are still settled under a sliding scale; so that the ascertained price is still got out every quarter.

1487. Has the continuance of this system at all facilitated the negotiations between you and the workmen since the sliding scale was abandoned?—Yes, that factor has always been taken into account by both parties. "Facilitated" I am not quite sure that it has been, because on one particular occasion the sliding scale gave a better ascertainment; I mean to say, the sliding scale ascertainment was higher than the quoted price was, and, as we were at that moment engaged in negotiation with the miners, the miners said, "Oh, but look here, you can pay us a bit more; "your own sliding scale shows that the ascer- "tained prices are better than the quoted "prices."

1488. Have you gone on the lines or attempted to go upon the lines laid down by the sliding scale in the main in these negotiations?—We, as mine owners, have all along said, whatever the objection of you miners to the sliding scale may be, we still regard it as representing the rates of wages we can fairly pay on a given price of iron; and all our negotiations have proceeded, on our side, upon that assumption. They have denied it, and I do not put it upon Mr. Toyn to accept that; but he, on his side, will not deny that that has been alleged by us over and over again.

Mr. *Trow.*

1489. Your sliding scale works very well on the whole, I believe?—Very satisfactorily.

1490. But as a last resource, to prevent strikes or to prevent a cessation of work, you believe in arbitration?—Yes, I would rather do anything than have a cessation of labour.

1491. And your opinion is that in general arbitrations a practical gentleman who fully understood all the requirements of the trade would be better able to give an award that would be satisfactory to both parties and beneficial to the trade than, say, a solicitor or a barrister who knows nothing at all about the

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

trade?—I am not quite sure that I quite accept that.

1492. I understood you to say you believed in practical gentlemen sitting as arbitrators?—No; I think any man of sound judgment and acute mind would serve the purpose. Of course if you have to teach him the A B C it is rather difficult.

1493. Mr. Toyn objected to some of the umpires who had been sitting knowing nothing at all about the trade, and giving the workmen a less amount of wage than even the employers had offered them?—I should not have thought that Mr. Toyn would have said that.

1494. He did, in a local case. He said that the award of the umpire was a less amount of wages to the workmen than the firm who were implicated had offered to the workmen?—No doubt he was justified in the remark if he made it.

1495. You said you thought that the Legislature should enact a law to compel both parties to practically carry out the awards when they had pledged themselves, or impose a fine?—No. I was careful to say that I did not want the Legislature to enact anything. I should be glad if there were an arrangement by which the one side and the other would become financially responsible for the carrying out of an award.

1496. I suppose you have never known a case where an appeal has been made to enforce the carrying out of an award by law?—No, I do not think I remember any case.

1497. Have you ever known a case where the Joint Committee or Board of Arbitration have compensated the employer for loss caused by a body of workmen refusing to carry out the award of the Joint Committee or umpire?—Oh, I have no doubt it has occurred.

1498. Have you ever known a case?—If you will put a specific case to me I will tell you whether I know it.

1499. Are you aware—not in mines, but in the case of the Moor Company—that the company received from the Arbitration Board, composed of employers and employed, a sum of, I think, speaking roughly, 600*l.* odd, to compensate them for the loss sustained owing to the men refusing to carry out the award?—You are speaking of the Moor Iron Company?

1500. Yes?—Knowing your intimate connexion with that Arbitration Board, I have no doubt that you are rightly stating the case.

1501. In both these cases it was Sir Rupert Kettle's award. In the first case it was in the Britannia Company, and the case went before the judge of assize at York, and the judge decided that the men were bound to act in conformity with the award. In the other case, the board, feeling their own responsibility, compensated the Moor Company against the loss?—You mean the Board of Arbitration out of their own funds?

1502. Yes, in the second case, but in the first case the judge decided against the men, at York; it was left in his hands entirely?—When you say the judge, it was submitted to the county court judge, or somebody.

1503. No, it was submitted to the judge of assize?—No doubt you are right.

1504. You referred to the sliding scale. Is it not the fact that a sliding scale fixed permanently for two years is worth more than the continual trouble and annoyance of having to settle every three months?—I think it is. It would be difficult to value it in money.

1505. Your awards generally are for three months?—A Joint Committee award is deemed to be for three months.

1506. I mean you are everlastingly settling your wages; every three months you have a readjustment?—We have settled for six weeks before now.

1507. Do you not think it is possible to fix a basis that would be satisfactory to the employers as well as to the workmen, either on the ascertained price, which I agree with you is the only reliable price, or upon the paper price, the quoted price?—I think it would be quite possible to base a scale upon the ascertained price. I think it might be possible to base it upon the quoted price if certain precautions were taken, but I do not think that a scale ought to be of very long duration. It ought to be subject to revision at comparatively short limits of time, say two years or three years.

1508. But in fixing a scale you must take a longer period than two or three years. In fixing a scale, when prices are low or prices are high, you would always calculate upon leaving a small margin of profit?—I should try to do so.

1509. Then, if you have fixed your margin of profit upon a low price, as the price goes up the increase of wages to the men is only in proportion to the increase in what you receive or realise, so that the notion that the men have that you want to reduce prices for the purpose of reducing wages will not hold water. Your profits increase as you go up above the basis price, and as you come below your profit is reduced. You cannot take two years, but if you took either the ascertained price or the quoted price, and took it over a period of 10 years, you could arrive at a satisfactory scale?—There are two remarks which occur to me upon your question. The first is that almost every scale that I have had to do with has got a double jump in it, that is to say, has a point at which the advantage to the man is increased. That is the first point to be considered. And the second point to be considered is this, that the man gets an ever-increasing per-centage of profit.

1510. We do not?—You do not appear to, but you are getting it.

1511. That is, you mean, because of your double jumps. We take a period of 10 years because we believe we shall have all the jumps in. Then we fix what is a relatively fair rate of wages in comparison with the test of 10 years' experience?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale.*

1512. I rather understood Mr. Trow's leading question a minute or two ago to be this, whether in all the sliding scales with which you are acquainted there would be left to the employer, out of any advance in the standard commodity, under any well-arranged scale, a margin of profit?—Yes.

1513. In that event would there not be left to him an inducement to strive for a higher price because that higher price would not be given away by him altogether in wages, but would go in part into his own pocket, and increase his profit?—Yes; I have answered that question to Mr. Burt already. I have, in reply to Mr. Burt, said yes to that.

Mr. *Trow.*

1514. I am an advocate of scales, and I do not believe in the double jumps. I want the scale to give the men the advantage when they need it, when prices are low. They do not need the double jump after a certain point. I believe it is possible for you, in taking it over a longer period, to get a basis which would be fair to the employer and satisfactory to the men. I asked you if it is not possible to get a satisfactory basis either on the ascertained price or the quoted price. If you take the quoted price you must take the quoted price over two months, and if you fix the basis in proportion to the quoted price, the basis will be so much lower than the ascertained price. It comes to the same thing in the end?—I really do not think that in reply to Mr. Trow I can supplement the answer which I gave to Mr. Burt at all. I think what I said in reply to Mr. Burt pretty well covers the question Mr. Trow was putting to me: that it appears to me that a sliding scale must in the interest both of the employers and employed give to the employers an advantage at the higher prices, because otherwise the criticism which Mr. Burt said was current upon sliding scales becomes a true one, that there is no interest in the employer to see prices go up. Supposing I can get 10 per cent. for my capital whether I am selling my pig-iron at 32*s.* or at 62*s.* I will just as readily sell at 32*s.* as at 62*s.*, but suppose I get a better return for my capital at 62*s.*, I shall be much more ready to sell it at 62*s.* than at 32*s.*, and the man therefore has the certainty that I will seek to get the highest possible price for the commodity I am dealing with. That is the interest of Mr. Trow's clients; he is acting as their representative I mean.

1515. When you replied to Mr. Burt as to the scale giving a higher rate of wages in a certain period you were going back to the period of 1873?—I did take 1873 into my purview.

1516. Just let me refresh your memory about 1873 to prove whether the scales were beneficial. Every scale then in existence gave a larger ascertained price than the quoted price. Our men asked for an advance and your men asked a little later. The fact is that No. 3 pig-iron was quoted at 109*s.* or 110*s.* up to April and May, but in September it was down to 86*s.* Now you had sold at the higher price; therefore in 1873 the scale would have given the men a considerable advantage over the ascertained price. But then comes another question. I understood you (I think it was in answer to Mr. Balfour) to say that the state of the labour market does not generally affect the scale. Is that your view?—Oh, no.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

1517. The ascertained price of the past two or three months governs the rate of wages for the preceding two or three months?—Yes.

1518. Have you ever known a case where the employers, after having in operation for two or three years a scale the basis of which has been awarded by an umpire, refused to carry out any longer the scale, repudiated the scale and asked that the scale should be suspended for a period, and a special reduction of wages enforced?—I have no personal experience.

1519. Not in the mines?—I know that you are referring to the manufactured iron trade of course.

1520. But it is a scale. Our men generally, I grant you, give notice to discontinue a scale if trade improved, but I want the admission from the employers that they are as ready, when trade becomes depressed, to take advantage of the depressed trade and surplus labour to discontinue the scale as the workmen are?—I can only say in reply to that that I have never been a party to giving such a notice. I do not say that I might not be because, as I have said in reply to Mr. Balfour and Mr. Burt, there are circumstances under which it might be necessary for an employer to terminate a scale, but as a matter of fact these circumstances have never arisen in my case.

1521. Not in mines?—No. I am not speaking with regard to the manufactured iron trade. I am not prepared to speak as to that.

1522. You will understand what it is I am referring to now?—Oh, yes, I quite understand.

1523. But you believe the scales on the whole have been the best means of arrangement?—I do indeed.

1524. And as giving the men the most regular rates of wages and a fair share in proportion to the sale of the article?—Yes, I do, very distinctly.

Sir *E. Harland.*

1525. I think you expressed a wish during the interesting evidence you have been giving, that the Associations of the employed as well as of the employers should have some fund at their back or at call which might be, by a process of law or otherwise proportionately forfeited in the shape of a fine, or otherwise in the case of the breaking of a mutual arrangement or the failure to abide by a decision which had been come to by an arbitrator in case of dispute?—Yes, I suggested it would be desirable if the decisions could be made, as it were, penally binding upon the people on the one side and upon the other.

1526. Do you express that opinion from your experience pointing in the direction of some instances where an arrangement mutually come

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

to had not been adhered to?—There have occasionally been such instances.

1527. Have the instances been on one side only, or on both sides?—One sees one's own side of the shield so much the best, and they occur to one as being much more serious breaches of an agreement when they are against oneself than when they are one's own breaches, and therefore, perhaps I am rather inclined to regard the breaches by the men as much more serious than the breaches, if any, by the masters.

1528. Was your Association formed prior to or subsequently to any Associations of the working men in your mining district?—I think subsequently. We have been in existence for 18 years, I think, and the men have been, more or less, organised for fully that period or longer.

1529. Do you chance to know whether their organisations originally were as Friendly Societies or as Trade Unions?—No, I do not know. Mr. Toyn would, I have no doubt, have been able to answer that question.

1530. What object had you in forming yourselves into an organisation?—The drift of events. You see we formed in 1873, and Trade Unions were becoming stronger and stronger, and it was found necessary that the masters should have a similar organisation.

1531. That, in other words, they should be placed upon an equal footing?—Yes.

1532. In that view of it, is it your opinion that both sides using the same power of combination, in that way the matter becomes practically balanced?—Yes: at all events we are now negotiating as to equal powers.

1533. You referred to the fact that in the Cleveland district, the employers and the workmen had been more successful in arriving at satisfactory arrangements than in Durham: do you attribute that to the smaller number of employers in your district as compared with the Durham district?—I think you may rather say it is due to the industry being more homogeneous in Cleveland than in Durham. It is smaller, but I should think, even if the employers were more numerous, the difficulties of Durham would not arise, because it is so much more homogeneous.

1534. In other words you have less difficulty in acting in concert with each other?—Yes.

1535. And in determining upon a fixed policy under certain pressure of circumstances?—Yes.

1536. And you are therefore able to stand your ground better in the Cleveland district than in Durham?—Yes.

1537. You referred in the evidence you gave to my friend on the opposite side to one class of coal in Durham being in demand, and another class of coal also produced in Durham, not being in demand?—Yes.

1538. If the coal owners in Durham could agree amongst themselves to come when in doubt to one common action, without, as it were, disputing or disagreeing among themselves, do you think that would produce the same effect which you have in the Cleveland district?—Yes, but I think it is a counsel of perfection. Because just consider for one moment. The collieries in which I am interested are working for the purpose of supplying our iron works with coal. Now I can hardly imagine circumstances under which, supposing the iron trade to be in a flourishing condition, and consequently coke in large demand, and one of the other branches of the coal trade being in a depressed state, that we should be willing to stop our iron works, which are making profits, in order to save our colleagues, for whom we have the highest regard, from a loss in their branch of the trade, and *vice versâ*. Therefore I should be sorry to submit to the determination of a third party as to whether I should cease from making a profit, in order that they might cease from making a loss. In fact there is an inherent difference of interest which I should not be willing to submit to the arbitrament of a third party.

1539. Referring to your description of the method in which the sliding scale acts, you described very accurately how it did so in a rising market; does it act as quickly or as slowly on a falling market?—Yes; that is to say the objections to the sliding scale on the part of the men are equally great in a falling market as in a rising market, and for the same reasons. In a rising market they say it goes up too slowly, which I am bound to admit is the case—that it does go up slowly, and in the nature of things, goes up slowly; and in a falling market it goes down rapidly, and I say it must in the nature of things go down rapidly. Perhaps you would allow me to remind you of an observation which was made by Mr. Trow, which was to the effect that in the trade in which he is specially interested the averages are taken over a period of two months, and that period of two months is taken in order to avoid as far as possible the wide difference between the quoted price at the beginning of the period in question, and the end.

1540. How frequently do the steps or intervals occur in the rise or fall in the sliding scale; is it once a week or once a month?—Once a quarter.

1541. Once in three months?—Once in three months.

1542. Then, say the price has been determined by your sale books on the 1st of January as to what the selling price is, how soon after that are you able to determine what effect that shall have upon the wages: how soon are the men able to participate in their proportion of the rise?—Within a very few days. In point of fact this is the operation. Take the quarter to which you have referred. The accountants take out the actual deliveries for the months of October, November and December. The papers are all ready for them in the offices of the various firms, and they merely have to check the figures to see that they are accurate. They have then to strike an average. That is all done within the first three or four days of the month, the 4th or 5th of the month of January.

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

By the 5th or the 6th of January, they have published the result of their investigation; we have the ascertainment, and that ascertainment takes effect from the next following pay, which begins on the following Monday.

1543. Then if that is the method by which a rise is determined, in what way can there be any difference in point of time as to when a fall shall be determined?—There is no difference in point of time.

1544. Then how is it that the objection has been raised that the sliding scale is too slow in action; does the one not balance the other precisely?—No. I thought I had explained, in reply to Mr. Balfour, that the men's objection was to the discrepancy between the quoted price and the realised price. That is the difficulty. There is no difficulty in the men's mind as to that portion of the incidence of the sliding scale. The difficulty in the men's mind is as to the discrepancy between quoted price and ascertained price.

1545. I am assuming for a moment that the quoted price is quite out of the question, that we are merely dealing with the ascertained price. In evidence which we have already had from other witnesses it was stated that the objection of the men was that the sliding scale was too slow on a rising market in giving the men the benefit of the rise. Now, from your description, it would appear that the fall is also precisely as slow in acting; would the one not exactly balance the other?—No. The men make no objection to the scale, assuming its basis. They do not say that it does not act quickly enough in giving them a rise; nor do we complain that it acts too quickly in giving them a reduction. They say that its steps are not sufficiently close to the rise in the quoted price. At least, so I understand them.

1546. That was not what I gathered from previous evidence. It will appear now from your explanation, and from your view, that it is a matter of a re-adjustment of the method by which the gradation should be arranged in the sliding scale, and after that you think it might be applicable for limited periods of time to work advantageously to both parties?—The objection that you stated at the beginning of your question is, I understand, the objection which the men take to the scale.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

1547. I think both objections were made?—Indeed!

Sir *E. Harland.*

1548. With regard to your objection as employers to taking into account anything whatever of quotations of price, that is to say, the list prices of pig, may I ask from what quarter the journals quoting those lists receive their information, is it from manufacturers, or is it purely the nominal value in the market?—The quotations that we are now getting are the quotations of Middlesbro' No. 3 pig-iron on the Scotch Exchange.

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

1549. That is, the quotation is from those who operate on the Scotch Exchange?—On the Scotch Exchange; and they are in every sense analogous to the quotations of Consols or any other merchantable stock.

1550. Your reason, therefore, in objecting to taking any cognizance whatever of the quotations, is that in so many cases, particularly at very high points in the price, they are totally unreliable?—Unreliable in this sense, that you have no idea as to the quantity to which they refer. You may say, in some very speculative stock for example, that it runs up to a high price. The sale at the top price, which may be a 100 per cent. advance upon its nominal value, may represent one single share. A sale of pig-iron at the top price may represent a lot of 10 tons or 100 tons upon a production of many hundreds of thousands, and it is for that reason that the quoted price on any Exchange cannot be accepted by the maker as representing the figure at which his iron will go into consumption, which is, after all, the question he is seeking to answer.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

1551. With regard to arbitration, you spoke of making it penally binding in case of the award not being accepted by either one side or the other; do you think that would be practicable?—I have said that I think it is a counsel of perfection. One would like to have some way in which it would not be the mere expression of opinion of a tribunal, but that that tribunal should have the opportunity of enforcing its decision.

Mr. *Burt.*

1552. Could you explain more fully how it is that the fall is so much quicker than the rise; we may assume it is a fact that it is so?—I am afraid it is a fact that it is so. I think that is a question of psychology rather than anything else. I do not know what the explanation is. In point of fact the demand overtakes production. The producer strains every nerve to follow after the demand, in order that he may reap the harvest of the high price. At the very top moment he attains it, and more than supplies the demand, and down the price tumbles, and that, I am afraid (it is a most unpleasant admission for a manufacturer to have to make), is in the nature of things. We must be alternately slowly climbing up the incline, rushing up the slope of the mountain, tumbling over the precipice at the top, rolling down the foot-hills, crawling along the valley, and then beginning the thing over again. That I think is in the nature of things.

1553. It is easier going down than climbing?—Yes, it appears so.

Mr. *Mann.*

1554. One question respecting the working hours. The large majority are working on the eight hours shift principle, are they not in

Mr. *Mann*—continued.

Cleveland?—It would mislead you if I said yes in reply to that question. They are in fact working something like eight hours, but there are not three shifts of eight hours. As a rule, the miners are only working one shift of eight hours; sometimes two shifts of eight hours.

1555. But there is a small section of men (I have not been able to gather how many) who I think are working 11 or 12 hours?—Yes; there are some who are working 12 hours.

1556. Have any steps been taken to reduce their hours?—No, none.

1557. Do you consider it desirable that 12 hours should be worked by those men?—I do not think it is other than desirable. I think there is no objection to it, nor do I think there is much objection made in Cleveland to it. You see the men who are working 12 hours are such men as pump-engine men or fan-engine men or ventilating-engine men, who have to work the whole clock round. Their labour is not of a very severe kind. It involves, as a rule, merely their presence, and I do not think there is a serious objection, nor do I think there is great objection raised to it in Cleveland.

1558. Do they put in six or seven shifts a week?—I think that they are almost invariably putting in seven shifts a week, and when they are putting in seven, the seven count as eight. They have a shift and a half for a long term.

1559. But actually they are putting in seven times 12 hours a week?—In certain cases, no doubt. In certain cases the machinery is kept going from Saturday night to Saturday night. I would suggest to you, perhaps, if you were to ask these technical questions of my friend, Mr. Walker, who is going to follow me, he would be able to give you more precise answers than I can.

1560. Just one question concerning the sliding scale as a basis. You said that the sliding scale has no logical basis, but that it is a very good haphazard way of settling differences?—Yes.

1561. Have you any superior method in your mind which you can suggest?—No, I have no suggestion to make. I think it is a very good haphazard way.

1562. But it is certainly an unscientific way?—It conforms to the requirements of the moment, interpreting the moment to extend to

Mr. *Mann*—continued.

a period of many months, say 18 to 24; and there are very few human institutions that do more.

1563. Although you did clearly give that expression of opinion, which would indicate that possibly there was a better method to be arrived at, you are not prepared to make any suggestion as to any superior method?—No, I am not at all.

Mr. *Dale.*

1564. Would the Commission be right in understanding that your suggestion that there might be advantage in some pecuniary responsibility on the part of the Owners' Association, or the Miners' Association for the due carrying out by each side of any award or agreement, did not proceed from any strong sense that that was needed in Cleveland, but rather proceeded from your general industrial knowledge?—Yes. All the decisions of these tribunals you have been told have no binding effect except upon the consciences of the persons who are involved. Now it is clear that it would be better if they had some effect which should be of a more binding character, and what suggests itself to one is that the persons who can bring the pressure of the opinion of their own class to bear should be the persons who should be made responsible for bringing it to bear. No doubt if the owners on one side were mulcted in a considerable fine for a breach of a Joint Committee decision, they would be careful that the members of their Association submitted to the stress of their displeasure for such breach. We should make it as uncomfortable as we could for your firm if you were guilty of a breach (I am putting it upon your firm because it is so improbable that it would take place), and we should hope that the men on their side, if they thought their Association were responsible and had to pay a money fine for a breach of the rules, would make it very uncomfortable for the Lodge which had been guilty of imposing upon them this money fine.

1565. I only wanted to bring out what I have no doubt was the fact, that your observations on the subject were not the result of your special experience in Cleveland, but of your general experience in connexion with many other industrial organisations?—That is so.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. William Walker called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

1566. You are a mining engineer residing at Saltburn-by-the-Sea, near Cleveland?—I am.

1567. How many years' experience have you had in the Cleveland ironstone district?—22 years.

1568. Are you one of the managers of mines at which the machines are used for getting the ironstone?—I am. I am also the inventor of a machine. The machines only and no hand miners are employed at two mines under my

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

supervision. It is owing to the machines that this stone is available for the market at all.

1569. How long have the machines been in use in the Cleveland district?—Some 16 years.

1570. At how many of the Cleveland mines are the machines now used?—At seven mines; that is, at six of the associated mines, and at one of the non-associated mines.

1571. Is the stone got entirely by means of the machines at the mines where they are in use?—At four of the mines in Cleveland where

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

machines, including the fillers, their average is very little less than the average of the hand miners; although it does not require an average hand miner to make a stone filler to follow the machine.

1583. Some of the men with the machines earn considerably more than others?—The two leading men with the machines make 7*s.* or 8*s.* per day; the fillers with the machines between 4*s.* and 5*s.* per day.

1584. What do the hand miners make?—About 5*s.* 3*d.* a day now.

1585. Have you any reason to believe that the men with the machines are dissatisfied with the mode in which their wages are apportioned as between the different sections?—No, I cannot think that that is the case, seeing that the matter has been the subject of arrangement between the Miners' Association and the mine owners. The employers might not object to a further redistribution of the rates paid for machine work, but the leading men who are employed at the work would strongly object to such a course. The machine men are members of the Miners' Association as well as the hand miners.

1586. Have you any statistics as to accidents with the machines?—I find over the past 10 years only three deaths have occurred in connexion with the machines, and during that time some 6,000,000 or 7,000,000 tons of stone have been won by them. This represents more than 2,000,000 tons per fatal accident for the machine men alone; and even this quantity does not include the shale, which in the case of the machines is worked in addition to the stone; roughly 400,000 tons have been the average quantity of stone won in Cleveland per life lost over the past 10 years.

The machine outputs of clean stone at the associated mines have been approximately as under:—

	Tons.	
1878 - -	41,343	
1879 - -	83,270	
1880 - -	296,080	
Three years prior to 1881 - -	420,693	
1881 - -	332,126	
1882 - -	341,611	
1883 - -	500,000	about.
1884 - -	601,000	
1885 - -	703,236	
1886 - -	700,000	about.
1887 - -	700,000	„
1888 - -	760,000	„
1889 - -	810,000	
1890 - -	870,000	
Total for 10 years	6,317,973	

The entire output of the associated mines (machine stone and hand-won stone) in 1890 was 4,868,263 tons, or something like 86 per cent. of the whole output of the Cleveland district.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

1587. The next question I see has relation to the particular cause of the three fatal accidents; do you feel desirous of making a statement on that subject?—I may state that in 1883 there was a shot firer lost his life by his going back too soon to the hole after he had lighted it. And in 1884 a filler was killed by a piece of sulphur falling upon him from the roof. In 1888 there was another shot firer killed by going back too soon.

1588. Was there anything in connexion with those accidents that might not have occurred if there had been no machine?—Nothing whatever.

1589. How do you account for the small number of fatalities in connexion with the machines?—By the employment of machines and the concentration of the dangerous portion of the work (the shot firing) into the hands of fewer men who have nothing else to do, such men naturally become very expert at the work, and fewer accidents occur. There is also the further advantage of the men working amongst less powder smoke and in a clearer atmosphere, which contribute to their health and safety, and there are fewer men exposed to the general dangers of the mine.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

1590. In your opinion have those machines had the effect of displacing more labour than they gave employment to in the Cleveland district?—No, I think the reverse. I think they have been the means of employing more than they have displaced.

1591. And there have been fewer fatalities in connexion with machinery than in connexion with hand labour?—Yes, there have been only three.

1592. In proportion to the output there have been fewer?—In proportion to the output there have been fewer.

1593. And the distribution of wages between the men you say has been the subject of mutual arrangement between the employers and the employed?—Yes; since the first commencement of the machine mining I think there have been four arbitrations.

1594. It has been several times before the Joint Committee?—Several times.

1595. Supposing, in cases where employers introduced machinery, and thereby displaced labour, they were in every case compelled to compensate the workmen whose labour was displaced, would not that seriously hamper the introduction of machinery in every kind of industry?—Very much indeed.

1596. Would not that be very detrimental to the interests of the country at large?—It would.

Mr. *Burt.*

1597. I understood from you that you have not had complaints from the workmen as to the distribution of the amount paid to the respective men employed in connexion with machines?—Never.

1598. If there were dissatisfaction among the men themselves would the employers object to any re-arrangement provided it did not increase

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

the aggregate amount paid?—No; I should not think that the employers would, but I should think the two skilled men would very much object.

1599. Any objections there might be would, you think, arise among the men themselves?—I think so.

Mr. *Trow.*

1600. Did you say that skilled men were taken in the first instance and put to the machines?—I say we take the best men we employ to the machines.

1601. Mr. Toyn, in his evidence a fortnight ago, complained that they took young fellows and put them to the machines to do the work for which they got the largest amount of wages, over the heads of the practical miners?—I think the men who are working in connexion with the machines represent the most skilful and practical men in the district.

1602. As miners?—As miners.

1603. Then you differ from the evidence given by Mr. Toyn a fortnight ago?—I do not think it is fair to say that you can educate a man to work the machines efficiently in less than two or three years; that is my experience.

1604. Mr. Toyn stated that when the machines were introduced, instead of taking the practical miner, you put some young fellow in to mind the machine who had no practical knowledge of the mine?—I introduced the machine myself, and I know what was done.

1605. How many men do you say the machines displaced?—I do not say they displace any men. I say there are men now that are employed who would not have been employed if the machines had not been introduced.

1606. How many tons per shift can a man get with a machine?—That depends very much upon the seam. The hardness or the character of the seam varies in nearly every pit.

1607. I have a statement here that in 1880 they got 50 tons a day. In 1885 the average was much more than double this quantity, in some cases nearly 200 tons a day?—Yes, but the machine has been very much improved. It is not due entirely to the skill or the experience of the men. The machines have been improved. I have myself four patents in connexion with the machines.

1608. But you say the machine is getting 200 tons per day; now how many men does each machine employ?—Each machine, as I have already stated, gives employment first of all to the man that goes with the machine, and an assistant to help to drill the holes. The next man it gives employment to is the shot-firer, into whose care all the shot firing is entrusted, and following him again are so many fillers.

1609. Now to get 200 tons by hand how many men will it take?—If you will tell me the particular mine I will tell you how many men it will take.

1610. Take any mine you like?—I do not think there is a machine getting 200 tons per shift. There may be a machine getting 200 tons a day of two shifts.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

1611. What I want to arrive at is this. If this machine gets 200 tons per day, how many men as employed in the old way would produce 200 tons?—In some pits a man would turn out 6½ tons per shift. In others he would not turn out more than 4 tons per shift. It depends upon the nature and character of the seam. I will show you two pieces of ironstone which are the extremes of each other.

1612. You say the machine has not displaced any labour, but the men say the machine turns out 50 or 100 or 200 tons, and therefore it displaces a large number of miners?—I say, taking the whole of the mines and the whole of the machines employed, the result is in favour of giving employment to men rather than displacing them. I mean to say that the machine has been the cause of employing more hands than it has been the cause of displacing, the balance being in favour of the machine, owing to mines being worked through the instrumentality of the machines that would otherwise not have been worked, and which could not have been worked by hand.

1613. You mean, I understand, this, that if the machines had not been introduced some mines would have been still closed?—Yes.

1614. And you think, although the machines may have displaced a number of men had the work been done by hand, yet, taking it on the whole, you believe it has given more general employment by opening these mines?—That is so.

Sir *E. Harland.*

1615. Your machines, I believe, are worked by compressed air?—Compressed air.

1616. Is it found that that method has also the advantage of improving the ventilation of the mine?—Very much so indeed, because you get the unvitiated air delivered from the drilling engines at the face where the men are working.

1617. And, under those circumstances, the men working round the machine are specially well placed for getting a plentiful supply of fresh air?—Yes, and all the workings at the face—at the extremities—are better ventilated altogether.

1618. You referred to there being less smoke in consequence of the use of the machine?—Yes.

1619. How do you account for that when it may be assumed that there would be quite as many shots fired?—To each machine there is apportioned so many places, say 12 or 15, having regard to the character of the seam. The machine first of all drills the requisite number of holes in one face. It then goes on its way to another. Meanwhile the shot firer comes and he charges and fires the holes, 6 or 7 or 10 or whatever the number may be. All the powder smoke, therefore, is confined to that one place, for the time being, and before the fillers come to fill the stone that these shots have brought down all the powder smoke has cleared away. Whereas, in connexion with hand mining the men in every place are using powder and make more or less powder smoke and the whole area of the district, 15 places, or

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

whatever they may be, is more or less affected with powder smoke.

1620. And in addition to that the air let loose at these particular points of the mine will also probably conduce to drive the smoke out of that particular part of the working?—Of course, that is the secret of the whole thing accounting for the better ventilation.

Mr. *Mann.*

1621. I should like to understand a little more clearly the effect of these machines. Of course, we are alive to the fact that it is desirable that machinery should be introduced, but there appears to be some little discrepancy between the evidence you have given and that which was given by the witnesses that were here a fortnight ago. Will you tell us if it is fair to put down the average tonnage at about 6 tons per day for Durham hand miners?—Yes, in a seam of ordinary character.

1622. Accompanying each machine there would be 12 men and a youth?—It depends, of course, upon the character of the seam how many tons per shift the machine gets. The machine in one mine will get probably 50 per cent. more than it will at another. I will give you good evidence why. *Here* is a piece of moderately soft stone—so soft in fact that it would not be beneficial to employ machinery; and *here* is a piece of very hard stone, where the men could not get more than four tons per shift by hand. That is got by machinery.

1623. You say they could not get more than four tons per shift, hand drilling?—That is so.

1624. And the machine is introduced because it can do it more effectually?—The machine in the hard stone will drill three feet in a minute or one minute and a half.

1625. But you say with regard to the same stone, it would not be worth attempting to get it by hand?—You could not get it by hand at a profit.

1626. Of the seven pits where the machine drills have been introduced, how many were standing idle prior to the machine being introduced—two, did I understand you to say?—Two of the pits that I superintend myself.

1627. Three then out of the seven?—Yes.

1628. I understand that 12 men and the youth that follow the machine do the work that was formerly done by 18 men?—That entirely depends upon the character of the seam.

1629. Take an average, in the same way that we spoke of an average body of men getting six tons with the hand drill?—The number of men employed in connexion with the machine in an average mine is not limited to the number of men who get and fill the stone. It requires so many men to put the pipes on, through which the compressed air is conducted to the face; it requires so many men to keep the machines in order. It requires somebody to attend to the engine that is compressing the air, and to the boilers which are working the compressors, so that altogether, on an average, I do not think it would displace so many. Assume you had a mine that is being worked entirely by hand labour, and you are going to introduce machines, I do not suppose it would be on the whole so large a displacement.

Mr. *Mann*—continued.

1630. With regard to the actual output of stone, it would probably displace the one-third as stated, but then you say it brings into operation a number of men as engineers and labourers. But is it not the fact that these machines have been introduced in several mines at any rate where the hand drillers were working already prior to their introduction?—I can give you the names of the mines where they are at work.

1631. Is it not the fact that in consequence of their introduction something like one-third of the total men working at those mines were displaced?—No, I say it is not so. I know of no case where one-third of the total men have been displaced by machines when they have been introduced at mines already working.

Mr. *Dale.*

1632. There are two questions here which we had better keep separate. There is, first, the question of how many men would be employed in one capacity or another if a given quantity of stone were got by machines as compared with hand. Then there is the question of whether certain stone could have been worked at all if it had not been for the machines. The latter is a question on which only an opinion can be formed; the former is a question upon which evidence may be given?—Speaking of one of the mines, which remained idle for some seven years, and which had been worked previously by hand labour, the number of men who got a stated quantity would be 216, all told, miners, deputies and shifters, enginemen, and every class underground. Out of the 216, by the introduction of machinery you would take away 100.

Mr. *Mann.*

1633. And what would be the output?—The same. I am taking a given quantity.

1634. That would displace more than a third, would it not?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale.*

1635. But that has only reference to the face men, where the displacement comes in; the back-bye men would all remain the same. You would have the same number of deputies, and the same number of men of other descriptions?—Yes.

Mr. *Mann.*

1636. Of course it does displace a considerable number in those pits where the work had previously been done by hand labour?—The pit that I am speaking of, that had been worked by hand labour, remained idle for seven years.

1637. Undoubtedly the effect of introducing the machine in several mines has been a great advantage, but evidence was given to the effect that over a period of years—I am not quite clear as to the number of years—some 2,000 men had

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

been dislodged and had had to clear out of the neighbourhood altogether?—That must be wrong. There are only 23 or 24 machines working altogether; and even if you take the average number of men as 10, that is only 240, not 2,000.

1638. Perhaps I was a little wrong in suggesting that evidence had been given to the effect that the machines had actually dislodged them, but there was a statement that there were that lessened number of men, which did not seem to fit in with your statement that there were more?—I say there are more, in consequence of the machines.

1639. With regard to wages, the hand miners get 5*s*. 3*d*. a day?—Yes.

1640. And you stated the fillers got between 4*s*. and 5*s*.?—Yes.

1641. And of the 12 men that follow the machine, 10 are fillers, are they not?—It depends again upon the seam. There may be eight fillers; there may be nine. I have known cases where eight men can fill. I know another case where nine men are required. I know another case where 10 are required.

1642. There appears to be a difference of something like 1*s*. a day between the fillers following the machine and the hand-drill miners. It was stated here by one of the witnesses that about 3*s*. 10*d*. or 4*s*. represented the wages of the fillers; you say between 4*s*. and 5*s*.?—Yes.

1643. It will be a little more than 4*s*. in any case, you say?—Yes.

1644. Then would not there be a difference of about a shilling a day for all the men except the two skilled men you have spoken of?—I do not think it would be a shilling a day; I think that the average might be taken at 9*d*.

1645. They work five days or six days?—They have an opportunity of working six.

1646. If they worked six days, that would be 4*s*. 6*d*. a week less?—Yes.

1647. It was also stated that where the machines are now introduced, they are introduced into those mines, or those parts of mines, where the best money could be made by a hand-drill miner, and that consequently the hand-drill miners had to go to those portions of the mine where it would not pay to take the machines, and where it was more difficult for a miner to make an ordinary day's pay, and that consequently it had the effect of reducing wages all round?—I introduced the machines myself in the first place, and I put them to where we could not afford to pay the men the price to enable them to make a living to get the stone.

1648. That would be in the commencement, I presume?—Yes.

1649. When probably the output was about 50 tons a day, as was previously stated?—That was when the machine was in a crude state.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

1650. But now it has been so far perfected that it has run up to 120, 130, and as high as 150?—Depending upon the seam.

1651. Do you mean that the output is at least twice as great per man with the machine as it is with the hand drill. The men turn out 6 tons per day?—6¼ tons with the hand working, I should say.

1652. And the machine will turn out 150 tons a day?—Yes; and it depends upon how many tons a day the machine is getting as to how many men would be required to fill.

1653. Do you have more than 12 men on a machine sometimes?—Yes.

1654. 13 or 14?—Yes.

1655. I suppose these machines increase profits considerably?—No one would put machinery in if it did not.

1656. Inasmuch as it increases the profits, as it is reasonable to suppose it does, I was wondering whether it would not be a fair question as to whether the rate of pay per man should not be as high with the men following the machine as hand miners obtained prior to the introduction of the machinery?—The men who are doing the dangerous work are paid higher wages.

1657. That is the two men only?—The two men only. They are the only men that are in any danger.

1658. Two are higher and 12 are lower?—Those two are the only men that are in any danger. The others never come into dangerous parts.

1659. Are steps about to be taken to introduce them into other mines?—I believe so; yes.

1660. How many do you know?—I cannot tell you that.

1661. Several?—Several I will say.

1662. The effect will be to displace a certain amount of labour, will it not?—I should say so.

1663. A similar proportion to that already stated?—Yes, I should think so.

1664. Referring to these two samples of the holes produced, I gather that this specimen is a jumped hole?—Yes.

1665. A hole produced by hand?—Yes.

1666. And this other one indicates that the cutter revolves?—Yes.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*.

1667. When you say that you anticipate that these machines will be introduced in other mines, do you mean in places where hand labour is now profitably employed?—Yes.

1668. Therefore in future the case will not be similar to those you mentioned at the beginning of your evidence, in which you said these machines had been used where hand labour could not be profitably employed, and where mines had been closed in consequence?—No. I was then speaking of the prior experience of the machines.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to 11 o'clock to-morrow morning.

FOURTH DAY.

Commission Room, Westminster Hall, Thursday, 23rd July 1891.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE MARQUIS OF HARTINGTON, M.P.

Mr. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

Sir E. HARLAND, Bart., M.P.
Mr. G. BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.
Mr. E. TROW.

Professor MARSHALL and Mr. TOM MANN (Group B.), the Right Hon. A. J. MUNDELLA, M.P., The Right Hon. Sir J. E. GORST, Q.C., M.P., Mr. M. AUSTIN, and Mr. G. LIVESEY (Group C.) also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Joint Secretaries.

Mr. LINDSAY WOOD and Mr. FRANK STOBART called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

1669. (*To Mr. Wood.*) You are the owner of collieries in the county of Durham?—Yes.

1670. And you are also the President of the Durham Coal Owners' Association?—Yes.

1671. The Durham Coal Owners' Association has, in reply to this Committee's printed questions, sent in very full answers, which are also in print, so that it will not be necessary for me to ask either of you gentlemen all the questions appearing on our list. As to many of them the answers already sent in will probably be sufficient without verbal evidence. I will therefore only take the material questions. What particular branch or branches of industry does your association represent?—The coal mining and coke making.

1672. Does it include the whole of the county of Durham?—Yes.

1673. Can you state the number of employers or establishments connected with your association?—In connexion with the association there are 48 firms owning 149 collieries. Last year they produced 25,782,190 tons of coal, which is practically five-sixths of the total output of the county of Durham.

1674. The firms forming your association produce five-sixths of the total quantity of coal raised in the county of Durham; is that so?—Yes.

1675. Can you state the aggregate number of workpeople employed by such firms?—There are 81,298 persons employed in the collieries of which the association consists. That includes the private railways and the coke washing; in short, all the persons employed, the number of which are necessary to be returned to the Government under the Mines Regulation Act.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

1676. Perhaps you might state the number of persons over 16 and the number of boys under 16?—The persons over 16 are 73,672, and the boys under 16 are 7,626.

1677. Rather more than one-tenth, not of the total, but of the number of persons?—Yes.

1678. Are you prepared to state what are the constitution, general objects, and subscriptions and benefits of the Durham Coal Owners' Association?—The association consists of representatives nominated by the subscribing firms and individuals to the association. The general objects are defined by the first rule of the association, which perhaps I had better read: "The "purposes and objects of this association are the "regulation of all matters connected with wages "of workmen and the protection of the members "against losses arising from strikes and restrictive action of or disputes with their workmen."

1679. How are the expenses provided?—The expenses are provided by calls upon the members in proportion to the tonnage raised at the collieries worked by them during the preceding year.

1680. Have you any objection to put in the rules of the Durham Coal Owners' Association?—I did not ask the association whether they wished to have them put in. I have them here.

1681. Would you desire to consult the association before putting them in?—If the Commission desire to have them put in, I should rather like to consult the association previous to doing so. I do not see any objection myself.

1682. It would be convenient if the association accedes to our wish?—I shall be glad to ascertain from the association whether they have

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

any objection, if it is the wish of the Commission.

1683. If your association deals directly or indirectly with matters of difference arising between associated employers and their workpeople, will you describe the manner in which it so acts?—I had perhaps better read the written reply: "First by joint committees consisting of "representatives of the Coal Owners' and Workmen's Associations, with an independent chairman, have been established for the purpose of settling local disputes at collieries belonging to the members of the association. These committees, however, do not deal with what are termed county questions, or questions affecting the general trade. On disputes arising on questions outside the jurisdiction of the joint committee, or which the workmen decline to bring before that tribunal, the cases are considered by the association, and in many cases representatives are appointed by it to confer with the management, the workmen's associations, and the workmen, and, if possible, to settle the dispute. If no settlement is arrived at and a strike results, the association considers whether the circumstances are such as to entitle the owner of the colliery to the protection of the association, and if so, the appointed representatives continue to advise the owners and management, who are bound to act on such advice."

1684. Do you put in the joint rules?—Yes, I can put in the rules of the joint committee.

1685. I think you may be considered to have put them in by sending a copy to the secretary already along with your proof?—I may say that there are three joint committees, that is, one for the hearing of the cases connected with miners, one connected with the coke men, and the other with the mechanics; all three have rather different rules, affected differently by the circumstances of their employment.

1686. I rather doubt whether the joint committee rules of the mechanics have been put in, but if not you will have them sent. The miners' joint committee rules for November 1879 with certain additional rules dated July 26th 1887; the coke men's joint committee rules August 1880 were put in, but not the mechanics, I think?—I am not quite certain that there are specified rules for the mechanics.

1687. Perhaps you will be kind enough to have those put in?—I have a copy of the other two association's rules. I am not sure whether there are any different rules for the mechanics. This is a mere matter of arbitration.

1688. Will you put in a series of joint committee minutes?—I have here a copy of the minutes that have come before the joint committee during the present year which I can put in. (*See Appendix* 5.)

1689. It is not the agenda, but the minutes?—No, it is the minutes. The agenda, of course, contains many cases which have not been adjudicated upon. Those are only the cases which have been actually heard.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

1690. I see it begins with minutes of the joint committee, January 12th, 1891, and seems to conclude with the minutes of the joint committee of July 10th, 1891. May we take it that these are the minutes of all the joint committees that have been held this year?—I am not quite sure whether they include the coke men's or only the miners, but they include all the cases that have been heard on behalf of the miners.

1691. It is not a selection?—Oh, no, it is a perfect record of all that has passed. Perhaps I might state the number of cases and decisions of the joint committee during the past year, the previous year. I have here the numbers of meetings that have taken place and the number of decisions.

1692. We shall be glad to hear that?—The following are the statistics of the cases which have been heard at the joint committee during the year 1890. There were 25 meetings and 1,016 cases. 552 were miners, that is from the Miners Association; 54 from the Cokemen's Association; 15 from the Enginemen's Association; 18 from the Mechanics; 377 from the Owners; 305 were decided by the committee; 125 were referred to local arbitrations; 327 were settled by agreement between the two parties in dispute; 233 were withdrawn; and 26 were ruled as being out of the jurisdiction of that committee.

1693. Can you put in that summary?—Yes.

Mr. *Balfour.*

1694. Does that make up the total of 1,016?—Yes, it does.

Mr. *Dale.*

1695. Can you hand in that summary now, or later, if you think proper?—I will hand it in now. (*See Appendix* 6.)

1696. Does your association take action with the view of fixing the rates of wages, regulating the hours of labour, or generally prescribing conditions of service for the observance of members of your association?—Yes. The county average rates of wages for the various classes of workmen are fixed by the association in conjunction with the Durham County Mining Federation Board. This board represents the Miners', the Enginemen's, the Mechanics', and the Cokemen's Associations. The hours of work are also fixed by the association in conjunction with the Miners', Enginemen's, and Mechanics' Associations for the classes of work performed by the members of those bodies.

1697. I see the word "cokemen's" is left out of that last answer of yours?—It is because cokemen's work is entirely piece-work, and there is no distinct regulation as to the exact hours which they have to work. They have so much work to do.

1698. Have you any information for the Commission as regards wages, their amount, and fluctuations?—You refer to the rate of wages that have been paid?

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

1699. You state in this answer, "A table is "submitted herewith, showing the advances "and reductions in wages for the past 19 years, "and the county average rate of daily wage for "coal hewers after each change"?—Yes, I think that was put in, if not, I will hand it in now. (*See Appendix* 7.)

1700. You also say in reply to the printed questions, "A table is submitted herewith, "showing for the years 1881 to 1890 the "number of coal hewers idle when work was "provided ?—Yes, that is also attached to the proof.

1701. Is this it —Yes, that is it (*pointing to the same*).

1702. I pass over other questions which have been answered in writing, because they seem to be rather in the nature of records which it may be convenient for us to have, but which we need not obtain from you verbally as well as in writing; and I pass on to the "Dismissal of "representative delegates; refusal of unionists "to work with non-unionists; use of black "list; and, mutual relations of your associa- "tion with Trades Unions generally." Have you any observation to make upon that?—I will read the answer which has been submitted, "The representative delegates are treated the "same as any other workman. The members "of the Miners' Association in many instances "refuse to descend or ascend the mine with "men who are not members of that association, "and demand that such persons shall descend "and ascend in cages by themselves. The "relation of the association with the workmen's "associations are in general satisfactory, and "they would be more so if the workmen would "always act in accordance with the decisions "of their executive, and the arrangements "made between them and the Owners' Associa- "tion."

1703. You mean by the words, "the decisions "of their executive," the men's executive?—Yes.

1704. Can you state how many strikes and lock-outs there have been in connexion with your association in each of the 10 years from 1881 to 1890, in the current year up to date? —I have them from 1883 to 1890.

1705. Will you give what you have available? —There has been no general strikes or county strikes or lock-outs during the period named, but there have been numerous local stoppages of work caused by disputes with workmen. The number of such stoppages reported to the association during the years 1883 to 1890 are as follows:—In 1883 the strikes and stoppages were 32, consisting of 111 days; in 1884 there were 21, consisting of 92 days; in 1885 there were 19, consisting of 172 days; in 1886 there were 10, consisting of 19 days; in 1887 there were 17, consisting of 73 days; in 1888 there were 32 consisting of 62½ days; in 1889 there were 37, consisting of 109¼ days; and in 1890 there were 86 strikes and stoppages, consisting of 354½ days.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

1706. Can you enumerate the important disputes and furnish particulars with regard to some of them. Do you put in a table?—I put in a table of many of the principal strikes that have occurred.

1707. Is that it?—Yes (*handing in same*).

1708. Will you say what guided you in the selection of those particular strikes; was it the importance of them?—I think they have been chiefly taken from their importance and the expenses which have been entailed upon our association. I believe they are, in fact, all the cases in which compensation was claimed under our association rules.

1709. It is a very interesting table, and it seems almost essential that you should read part of it, otherwise the Committee will hardly know what it means or refers to. I understand that this is a return of all those strikes which have taken place at collieries belonging to members of the association since 1880, and in respect of which your association has had to make compensation under its rules to the owner affected by that strike?—That is so.

1710. And it is not a selection of them?—No, it is not. Do the Committee wish me to read it?

1711. Yes?—In 1880: "Cause of dispute, "men refused to ride with non-unionists. The "attitude of Owners' Association towards dis- "pute; supports owners." That will appear in all cases. "Result of dispute, the men go to "work, which means that the men came out, "but shortly afterwards the request has been "granted." The next case: "Men request non- "union men to show pay tickets, the men are "summoned, and the men resume work on con- "dition that the owners withdraw summonses." In 1882: "Men dissatisfied with action of Keeker, "and want him dismissed." There is no remark as to that. The same year: "*Re* starting jet "seam, men object to putting cavils, and leave "without notice; mode of settlement, a con- "ference; the result of the dispute, men to pay "damages and the question sent to arbitration.' In 1883: "Men resist joint committee's award; "mode of settlement, a conference; result, men "to resume work as before, and the whole question "submitted to arbitration." In 1883 also: "Men "resist joint committee's award; mode of settle- "ment, a conference; result, question referred "back to joint committee." In 1884: "Putters "resist joint committee's award; mode of settle- "ment, Miners' Association"; that is, the authority of the Miners' Association exercised on the men; "men resume work under award.' In 1884: "Men want manager suspended for alleged "breach of Mines Act, and allege that gas test "is out of order; an agreement is come to, the "gas test is put in order, and the men resume "work." In 1885: "Idle on account of owners "discharging 5 putters; were then summoned: "would not resume work unless owners with- "drew summonses; result, men resume work "under old conditions; men pleaded guilty; "the fines not being enforced by the owners, "the men paying the costs only." In 1885

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

again: "Men refused to ride with non-unionists; "mode of settlement, a conference; result, men "resume work and to pay damages." I think I need not read the whole of them. In the year 1890: "Gas in mine, men alleging that it was "not safe to work; mode of settlement, a con- "ference; result, the place reported to be safe "by Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines, and men "resume work." The same year: "Men on "strike to enforce a reduction of working hours; "and the result, agreement arrived at as to the "hours of descending and ascending." The next case: "On strike because 4 coke men "were discharged and miners demanding 8 "hours on Baff Saturdays; result, coke men "withdrew request for re-instatement of men, "and miners withdrew their request for 8 hours "on Baff Saturdays." The next one: "Backshift "men were not allowed to ride on coming out "before proper time; men then struck work, "were summoned and fined; men refused to "pay fines and came out on strike; and the "result of the dispute was, men to resume "work; owners had taken on account of "fines awarded by magistrates wages then "due; agreed not to take out further sum- "monses nor enforce balance due on original "summonses; committee of two associations to "meet and consider other questions." The next case: "Strike to enforce a seven hours maximum "shift from bank to bank; result, times fixed "in accordance with a concession made during "the continuance of this strike applying to the "whole county." The next case; "Manager "refused to meet check weighmen on deputa- "tions; result, manager will meet check weigh- "men when acting as one of the deputation; "men to pay damages for lying idle." The next case: "Men refused to draw cavils unless "certain requests were granted; result, men to "resume work, cavils to be re-drawn, but acknow- "ledged by both sides that in the absence of "men the cavils to be drawn by owners; men "to pay damages." Another case: "Putters "dissatisfied with their wages; result, 3*d.* ad- "vance to putters in Busty seam, and the 2*d.* "advance to putters in the Brockwell seam." Another case: "Men dissatisfied with prices "fixed under an award of joint committee; "mode of settlement, conference; men sum- "moned; and the result was, return to work "unconditionally; and the award was then "referred back to the umpire for consideration, "men to pay damages." Another case: "Putters "laid pit idle without any reason, and after- "wards said it was a question of putting hewers; "mode of settlement, a conference; result, men "summoned, and to pay damages; the question "referred to committee of two associations for "settlement." The next case: "Men demand "that deputies be compelled to join Miners' "Union; conference resorted to; result, perfect "liberty for deputies." And the next, 1891: "Sympathy for men out on strike at a neigh- "bouring colliery; mode of settlement, a con- "ference; result, men summoned to pay damages "and costs." The next case: "Strike to enforce

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

"claim instead of bringing it before joint com- "mittee; result, men resume work, case to be "brought before joint committee in the usual "way, the men to pay damages."

1712. I have read the cases that have occurred in the three or four earlier years and the cases that occurred last year and this year. It does not seem to me that any of the inter- mediate cases need be read as they do not differ in their general character from those quoted. Now does any system exist in connexion with your association for providing for conciliation, arbitration, sliding scales, or other means of preventing or arranging trade disputes?—Yes. The joint committee previously referred to are arbitration boards for the settlement of local questions: copies of the rules of these committees are submitted herewith. On general questions when the Owners' and Workmen's Associations have been unable to agree, the matters in dis- pute have frequently been referred to arbitration. The following is the list of arbitrations which have taken place, I believe, from 1874 up to the present time.

1713. It would be interesting to read it?—The date was October 1874, the class of work- men affected were the miners; the subject matter of the arbitration was reduction of wages; and the name of the umpire was Mr. Russell Gurney. In April 1875 the class of workmen affected were the miners, and the subject matter of the arbitration, reduction of wages; before Mr. W. E. Forster. In January 1876 the class of workmen affected were miners; the arbitration was for reduction of wages; it was before Mr. C. H. Hopwood.

1714. These are general questions, I suppose?—Yes; these are general questions affecting the whole trade of the county.

1715. The questions not coming within the jurisdiction of the joint committee?—No. In August 1876 the class of workmen affected were the miners; the arbitration was for reduc- tion of wages; and it was before Mr. Shaw Lefevre. In April 1878 it was miners affected and a case of working hours; the arbitration held before Mr. A. J. Meynell. In 1879 it was miners affected, the case for reduction of wages; and it was held before Mr. T. Bradshaw. Mr. Meynell is the county court judge of Durham and Mr. Bradshaw is the county court judge of Northumberland. In July 1879 it was a miners case of reduction of wages; before the Earl of Derby. In August 1880 it was a miners case affecting hours of working; and arbitration held before Lord Rowton. In December 1890 it was a miners case affecting hours of work; held before Mr. J. R. D. Lynn, who was a county court judge too. In April 1875 it was a case affecting coke men, for reduction of wages; Mr. W. E. Forster arbitra- tor. In January 1876 it was a coke men's case for a reduction of wages; before Mr. C. H. Hopwood. In August 1876 it was a coke men's case, for reduction of wages; before Mr. Shaw Lefevre. In June 1877 it was a coke men's case, for reduction of wages; held before Sir

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

J. F. Stephens. In January 1882 it was a coke men's case respecting wages; before Mr. Joseph Dodds, M.P. In October 1882 it was a question of the coke men's wages; before Mr. J. Dodds, M.P. In February 1876 it was a case of the mechanics respecting the reduction of wages; before Mr. Joseph Dodds, M.P. In May 1877 it was a mechanics' case for the reduction of hours; before Mr. D. F. Steavenson. In July 1880 it was a mechanics' case as to hours; arbitration held before Sir Richard A. Cross. In February 1881 it was a case of deputies for advances of wages; before Mr. J. Hinde Palmer. In Februray 1876 it was a case affecting the engine men for reduction of wages; before Mr. Joseph Dodds, M.P. In December 1876 it was a case affecting engine men for reduction of wages; before Mr. Joseph Dodds, M.P.

1716. There has not been any general arbitration since 1882?—There has not.

1717. But what is this December 1890; is that right where Mr. J. R. D. Lynn acts as arbitrator?—Yes; I think it was a question of hours. (*Mr. Stobart.*) It was a question of reduction of hours for some particular colliery. I think for the night-shift collieries. (*Mr. Wood.*) Yes; I think it was a question of the hours that had to be worked by the night-shift collieries; it only affected a few collieries in the trade.

1718. Apparently, with that exception, there has been no general arbitration since 1882?—This can hardly be called a general arbitration, because it was only the settlement of what ought to be treated as an agreement between the two associations as to the hours of work by the night-shift workmen.

1719. It was a question of interpretation merely then?—Yes.

Mr. *Balfour.*

1720. Would that be a general question?—It was a county question. The two associations agreed that the hours of labour should be reduced and a certain number of hours worked by the workmen from bank to bank, and the hours at which they had to go down the pit were settled, but in the case of a colliery working three shifts there was little difference what the hours ought to be, and, especially on the Saturday night-shifts, what time they had to be loosed on the Saturday night, it was a question of that sort, affecting half a dozen collieries, which was referred to this arbitration.

1721. It was a question of interpretation?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale.*

1722. With that exception I find no more recent date than October 1882, or nearly nine years ago?—Yes.

1723. Before travelling away from the table, at the bottom of page 3 of your evidence, I should like to ask you whether you are able to give us or could you supply to us afterwards a tabular statement showing the results of these various arbitrations?—I have not one here.

1724. We had one supplied by the secretary of the Cleveland Mine Owners' Association yesterday, and it was a rather interesting statement, showing in regard to each of the arbitrations what had been its result. It might have been an owners' claim for a reduction disallowed by the arbitrator or conceded in part by the arbitrator or conceded in the whole by the arbitrator. It was that kind of brief summary of the nature of the claim and the nature of the decision?—Yes. I could easily obtain that information for the Commission if it was thought desirable.

1725. It would throw some interesting light upon the question of whether the arbitrations in the Durham coal trade have resulted in decisions in favour more of the masters or in favour more of the men or whatever it may be?—If you wish it I can obtain that return. I have not got the figures by me.

1726. Does the sliding scale prevail in the Durham coal trade?—Yes; the first scale was made in March 1877; that scale lasted until December 1878, and it was determined by the owners. The second scale was made in October 1879, and that continued until December 1881.

1727. Who terminated that?—The men. The third scale was made in April 1882, and terminated on the 31st December 1883. That was terminated also by the workmen. The fourth scale was made on June 12th, 1884, and was practically a renewal, I think, of the previous one, and that terminated on the 31st July 1889. Since that date there have been no scales in operation.

1728. Between the end of the first scale and the beginning of the second scale there appeared to have been about 10 months; that is December 1878 to October 1879?—Yes, 10 months.

1729. Between the second scale and the third scale, December 1881 and the beginning of the third scale, April 1882, there were about four months?—Yes.

1730. And between the ending of the third scale, December 31st, 1883, and the beginning of the fourth scale in June 1884, there would be about six months?—That is so. There were some negotiations took place between those dates.

1731. Has there been no sliding scale in operation since July 31st, 1889?—No, none.

Mr. *Burt.*

1732. Who gave notice of the termination of that last one?—The workmen. They are all terminated by the workmen, except the first one, and that was terminated by the owners.

Mr. *Dale.*

1733. How have the advances or reductions in wages been arranged since the termination of the last scale two years ago?—That has been done by conference between the owners and the Federation Board, that is, the executive of the miners, the mechanics, and the engine men and coke men.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

1744. You do not know whether it would have any weight with the disputants if it did so?—I do not think it would have much.

1745. Now, supposing that that first desideratum remains a desideratum and a larger number of cases continue to come before the joint committee than it can settle in the time at its disposal, could you suggest any change in the organisation of the joint committee itself which would enable it to deal with those cases?—They could only do it by multiplying the sittings or you might have two committees. You might divide the county into a smaller number of circles.

1746. Would it be advisable to divide the county into administrative districts and have a joint committee for each?—It would be quite possible, but you might not have the judges of the three or four different centres acting all on the same uniform principle throughout the county.

1747. You have already three joint committees I understood you to say, one for the miners, one for the coke-men, and one for the mechanics?—Yes, all governed and presided over by one judge.

1748. But the members of the committees other than the chairman are not the same in all three cases?—There are always some members of one committee upon the other committees; they are practically almost the same men.

Mr. *Dale.*

1749. On the owners' side, perhaps, you mean?—Yes, I mean on the owners' side. The owners appoint a committee of a certain number of men who do not attend every meeting; they overlap, as it were. Suppose there were six of them, there would be four on one committee and two out of the other districts. The area of the county is divided into three, the east district, the Auckland district, and the north district, because the classes of work in those three districts slightly vary. The east district has very deep, heavy mines, rather different to those in the north district, where the seams are shallow and near the surface, and the Auckland district has more of coking coal seams. There are six men from each of those districts; four members will compose one committee, with one member from each of the other districts upon the same committee, so that you get an intermingling of the members of the whole on each committee.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

1750. Do you think it is essential that for the decision of these questions all through the county you should have practically the same committee, and certainly the same chairman?—I think so. I think it is a great advantage, otherwise you would get one interfering with the other.

1751. You do not think that the difference in the conditions of the three districts that you have named is such as to make it possible to have three different committees?—I do not think it is impossible, but I think it would be preferable to have one chairman.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

1752. You think such a cure would be worse than the disease?—I do not say it would be worse, but I think it would be much more preferable to have one chairman, who would always decide on the same principles.

1753. The strongest reason for not having three distinct committees is the necessity for having one chairman. Your one chairman is the county court judge?—Yes.

1754. He, I suppose, is paid for his services?—Yes.

1755. It would not be possible to have three committees and appoint a permanent chairman to each?—I do not see any impossibility at all. I may say in the adjoining county, Northumberland, I rather think that their principle is a better one than ours. In our case, in the county of Durham, any dispute whatsoever as to an advance of wages can be brought before the joint committee. In Northumberland it can only be brought if the wage that is the subject of arbitration affects the whole colliery. For instance, the colliery is sub-divided into a series of districts. The smallest part of a district is called a flat, which probably employs half a dozen men or something of that sort. If the wages of that flat are below the average of the county the men can apply for an advance, but in Northumberland the total wages of the colliery—the pit itself—must be below the county average before they can apply for an advance for that particular flat.

1756. The Northumberland system limits the number of cases which come before the joint committee?—It limits the cases before the joint committee and causes those cases in which there is a discrepancy to be settled between the men and the owners. I should think you will probably hear when the Northumberland coal owners give evidence that their cases are infinitely smaller than ours.

1757. You think that in that respect their system is superior to yours?—I think, to a certain extent, it is. I think it still retains what I maintain is a great thing, that is, the individuality of management, the power of the manager of the colliery to deal with his own men and not to leave everything to arbitration.

1758. The prospect of being able to settle any questions which may arise by arbitration, I think you said, rather inclines the men to bring questions before the joint committee instead of settling them at the colliery?—My own opinion is that it has that effect, not only with the men but the owners.

1759. So that if it was absolutely necessary for them to settle among themselves, or if, on failure to settle among themselves, the only remedy was a strike, you think these questions could be readily settled at the collieries?—I do not say readily.

1760. But they could be settled at the collieries?—I think there would be fewer of them come to the joint committee than come now.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

1761. In answer to Mr. Dale, I think you said that the colliery owners made no difference between those who have been active in Union organisation and others?— No, they certainly do not.

1762. You do not believe that any men have been dismissed because they were the active representatives of the men's organisation?—There may be some isolated case of that character, but, as a rule, there is no difference made whatever. I might, perhaps, refer to a piece of evidence which was given by Mr. Patterson, who is the secretary of the Durham Miners' Association, with respect to one man. I think that was the only case which he gave of a man having been discharged and prevented obtaining work because he was a member—he did not say because he was a member, but he implied that, I think—of the miners' executive or an official of the Union. It so happened that the particular man was a man in my own employment, and I am therefore conversant with the whole facts. The man himself was a secretary of the local lodge; he was a man who contravened the rules of the colliery in two ways. He came out from his working place considerably before the time fixed for doing so. He also abstained himself from work very frequently, for as much as a week together through drink. He was cautioned by the manager that if he continued to do this he would have to be discharged. I was perfectly well aware that the case might be one which would come before the miners' executive at Durham, but being an official I told the manager to caution the man three times, on three transgressions before discharging him. The rule at the colliery was that a man coming out before his time had to be discharged, and I should think we discharged for that cause about 20 or 30 men at various times. I met a deputation of the men upon some other questions; this man was on the deputation. Mr. Patterson was in the room, and Mr. Wilson also.

(*Mr. Wilson.*) I was not there.

(*Witness.*) I beg your pardon. I know there were two members of the executive. I thought you were one, but it would be Mr. Forman: at any rate there were two of the executive present. I said: "Now, there is a case that is likely to "come before you. I have cautioned this man "that if he transgresses the rule of the colliery "he will get his notice, but I have already done "what I have not done to any other man, that "is, I have given him three warnings, and if he "does do it again he shall be discharged. I have "done so simply because he is a member of "your executive, and you shall not say that I "have done it for that purpose." The man did do it and he was discharged. I see by the evidence that he had been refused work at three or four different collieries. I wrote to each one of those collieries. I have the replies here in which everyone distinctly states that there were no communications received whatever from our collieries respecting that particular man when he was refused work. I asked the manager, and he said he told the men themselves that he had never done so, and it would be the very last thing that he would do. That is confirmed by the various collieries to which he went.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

1763. Then you think Mr. Patterson is entirely in error in ascribing this man's dismissal at any of the collieries to which he went to the fact that he was an active Union official?—I cannot say what the other collieries did. I can only speak for my own. I know that no communication was sent by me from our colliery, or by my agent to any one of those collieries at which he was refused work. I know the reasons why he did not get work at some of the collieries, and I can give you the letters if you like.

1764. I should only like to know that it was not due to his belonging to the Union?—No.

1765. It had nothing to do with his belonging to the Union?—Nothing whatever.

1766. If I understood Mr. Patterson rightly, he said that this case was peculiar in the respect that you last mentioned, namely, that the man was refused work at colliery after colliery, but unless I am mistaken Mr. Wilson said he knew of a large number of cases of men who had been dismissed because they were in active connexion with the Union: I think he mentioned that there were about 70 cases?—I have not read the evidence.

1767. You believe that is a mistake?—I do. I certainly think so. It could not be for that particular reason. I am sure of course after all it would only be 70 out of 80,000 men.

Mr. *Trow.*

I have a note of the examination by Mr. Balfour with reference to the sacrificed men. He said that the men who had worked 10 days per fortnight——

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

That is a different case.

Mr. *Trow.*

But that was a case of sacrificed men.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

I am coming to that; that is a different case.

Mr. *Trow.*

Another statement was that when he left your pit, Mr. Wood, and went to another pit he went under an assumed name, and in the next place he dismissed himself. That is the note I have.

(*The Witness.*) I think it was in Northumberland, he went to some colliery and found the seams were rather too hard for him.

Mr. *Trow.*

He did not like it and he dismissed himself; that is the note I have.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

1768. Suppose there was a case where a dismissal undoubtedly took place because a workman belonged to the Union, and had taken an active part in its organisation, do you think that is a

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

case which could be advantageously considered by the joint committee?—Of course the colliery owner contends that he has a right to discharge any of his servants for any cause.

1769. The owners decline to allow any question connected with the dismissal of men to come before the joint committee?—They decline to have that power taken away from them and to be compelled to employ a man they do not want.

1770. That I quite understand, and that I believe is also the case in the Cleveland district; but it was given in evidence with regard to the Cleveland district that if such a case arose it would be a proper case to bring before the joint committee?—According to our rules such a case could not be heard before the joint committee.

1771. No case of dismissal could be heard by the joint committee?—No; an owner maintains and holds that he has a right to discharge any of his men for any cause whatever.

1772. Certain evidence was given with regard to men discharged for loss of time, men who had not worked the full number of days in a week or a fortnight?—Yes.

1773. And others again were discharged because they could not make the county average. Is there any understanding as to how much loss of time constitutes a reason for dismissing a man?—No, it is left rather to the opinion of the colliery manager, but I think a man losing a certain amount of time, he being provided by the owner during that time with rates and taxes, house, fire, coal, and so on, should be liable to some such punishment, an owner is not very fond of a man who works very much less than the days he should work; there is an average 10 or 15 per cent. always off work.

1774. I quite understand that. Both in the case of loss of time and in the case of earnings being below the county average it is clear the line must be drawn somewhere; you could not be expected to keep a practically idle man in your employment; but what I desire to know is this, as there seems to be some dispute or disagreement between the men on the one side and the owners on the other as to what constitutes sufficient loss of time to be a proper cause for dismissal, and sufficient lowness of earnings to constitute a proper cause for dismissal, whether it would not be possible to have an arrangement, a definite understanding on the subject, arrived at by the joint committee?—Well, the understanding is that a man ought to work at least 10 days on pay. I do not think he would be discharged if he stuck to his work for 10 days out of a fortnight.

1775. You do not think he ought to be discharged if he works 10 days out of a fortnight?—No, I do not think he ought. I should not discharge him.

1776. But that has hitherto been left entirely to the managers at the particular collieries?—Yes, and I do not think it has been abused at all. In times when trade is bad and there are plenty of men there is no doubt that a colliery manager selects the best men he can get, for many reasons; the cost of working is very much

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

reduced when you have got good men as compared with what it is when you have got bad men.

1777. So you think in those cases where the men have imagined that a workman has been discharged for loss of time, he really has been discharged because it is necessary for the colliery owner to dismiss some man and he naturally dismisses the worst?—Yes, and I would do it myself. If a man is regularly abstaining himself from work I would discharge him, whether I am short of men or not, because I think it is a detriment to the other men and a detriment to the whole discipline of the colliery and incurs very heavy cost to employ men who regularly abstain from work.

1778. But you would not think that if a man works 10 days that would be sufficient ground in itself for dismissing him?—No, I put in a table showing the per-centages of the men who were actually off work during a period of years. It sometimes runs up as high as 15 per cent., I think (*handing in table*). It is a very curious table if you take the trouble to look at it. About the middle of the page there are two or three years where there were only 6 per cent. off; these were the periods of depression immediately after the strike that we had on account of wages.

1779. The question of loss of time and of low earnings seems to have given rise to some difference of opinion between the men and the owners. Mr. Wilson told us that very considerable sums were spent every year by the Union in supporting these particular classes of sacrificed men?—I do not remember any very great disputes upon that point as between the two associations.

1780. Not disputes; I use the word difference expressly because it appeared from Mr. Wilson's evidence that there was a difference of opinion between the employers and employed as to how much loss of time constituted a proper cause of dismissal, and how far a man's earnings might be diminished before he could be properly dismissed on that account?—There is no general understanding in the trade upon that point.

1781. You do not think it would be possible to establish through the joint committee or through the Federation Board some understanding with regard to that point?—I do not think so. I think you may take it for granted that if you fix the number of days a man has to work, that would be the maximum, and it would have the effect of reducing the hours still more.

1782. I was comparing the list of strikes which you gave with that which was given us by Mr. Wilson. I notice that most of the strikes that Mr. Wilson instanced, and that he gave us particulars of, were strikes that had occurred in non-associated collieries?—Yes, I think that was so, as far as I remember; I did not read the evidence, but I just looked it through.

1783. He gave us seven cases of strikes; four of those certainly were in non-associated collieries. Is Seaham a non-associated colliery?—No, that is associated.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

1812. Now, with regard to the arbitrations that you referred to, they were nearly all, if not all, demands for reductions of wages?—Hours of work and reduction of wages.

1813. I think you said with regard to the awards, they were generally accepted?—I think the awards affecting the general county have been always accepted.

1814. Always?—I do not remember any case in which they were not.

1815. And the complaints have reference entirely to the cases disposed of by the joint committee?—That is one large source, but there are many cases which arise, which ought to come before the joint committee, but which are taken and adjudicated upon by the colliery men without coming to the joint committee.

1816. Are you a member of the joint committee?—*Ex-officio* I am. I do not sit on the joint committee now.

1817. Can you state the total number of cases that have been disposed of by the joint committee?—From the commencement.

1818. From the beginning?—I have not it here ——. I have last year. This is the return of last year. (*See Appendix* 6.)

1819. The number would be very large?—Oh, yes. It is 1,016 for the one year. Cases brought before the joint committee, those are really the cases that have been adjudicated.

1820. That was for last year?—Yes.

1821. Can you say in how many cases the workmen declined to abide by the decision of the joint committee, out of that 1,016?—I cannot say. I have not the particulars by me. I do not think it is a large proportion by any means.

1822. The number appears rather startling when it is stated, but the county is a very large one. You have a great number of cases, so that the per-centage would be comparatively small?—I think it is.

1823. One does not want to encourage, but on the contrary to discourage as much as possible, any departure of the workmen or the employers either from any decision that may be come to, but it is only fair to say that the county is a very large one. You have a great number of cases, and the proportion of cases in which the joint committee's award is not accepted is very small?—I think it is.

1824. Now, as to the delay in settling cases. It was given in evidence by Mr. Patterson that in many cases several weeks may elapse before a matter is settled and then it may be postponed until a future meeting. Although the case may be comparatively trifling it may cause a good deal of irritation and friction?—That is so, no doubt.

1825. I do not want to put a leading question to you, but you would probably agree that it is desirable that cases however trifling they may be, should be settled with the utmost possible despatch?—I certainly think so. I think if a dispute arises, the sooner that dispute is settled the better. There is no object in delaying it.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

1826. Would an increase in the number of the meetings of the joint committee not be desirable?—I think it would, in some cases. In some districts, for instance, east district, that is one of the largest and heaviest districts, we have had special sittings to clear away a certain number of cases, and that I think has done good.

1827. Now as to the desirability of settling those questions locally, and not allowing them to come to the joint committee, an opinion in which I may say I entirely agree with you, is it not the fact that in many cases, or in some cases the complaint on the part of the workmen is that the manager has departed from an agreement that may have been come to?—No, I do not think so. I think if you will look through the decisions of the joint committee you will find very few cases of that character. I think the majority of the cases are disputes arising as to compensation to be paid for change of work, or things of that character, but not as to carrying out the award. There are cases, of course, where owners and men disagree on the reading of an award, and the owner not carrying it out

1828. I perhaps limited my question too much; I am not sure that I did say in refusing to abide by an award, but in departing from some agreement that may have been come to, independent of an award of the joint committee?—Well, there are cases, of course.

1829. Complaints against the manager?—There are cases of course where men and masters have differed as to what is the custom of the colliery.

1830. A case of that sort obviously could not be arranged between the manager and the workmen?—Oh no, there are a certain number of cases which, I think, ought to come before the joint committee, and would do so, but there are cases which ought to be settled between the two parties themselves.

1831. Are you able to say whether the managers do not decline sometimes to settle questions locally and refer disputes to the joint committee as the proper tribunal for disposing of them?—When the men are willing to settle them, and the owner is not?

1832. Yes?—I imagine that would only occur when he thinks that what the men require is more than he ought to give.

1833. But there is a difference there about which they cannot agree?—Yes, I do not know of any case in which the mine owner has said, "I will not meet you, you must go to the joint committee."

1834. I am not giving evidence, but I know that in Northumberland we have many cases coming before the executive in which the workmen have endeavoured to settle, and the manager has said "No, this is a question "I cannot settle; it must go to the joint com- "mittee," and it goes. Of course that increases the number of cases that come before the joint committee. Do you think there are not many cases of a similar kind in the county of Durham?

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

—I should not think there are many; there may be some, of course I cannot say; it is a matter for the opinion of the manager, whether it is a case that he ought to settle, or that the joint committee ought to settle; you can only get that by analysing the cases and seeing what they actually are.

1835. Is there an arbitration case pending at present between the coke-men and the owners?—Yes. I do not think the decision is given, but the case is closed.

1836. It is a recent arbitration case?—Yes, I think it is as to settling the hours of work, the rate of payment.

1837. In the case of the first arbitration to which you referred, I think it was in 1877, the only case in which the owners gave notice to terminate the sliding scale, did a strike result upon that?—It was in 1879; there was a strike afterwards; in that case the bottom of the sliding scale was defined.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

1838. There was a minimum?—A minimum was fixed, and it was fixed at rather a high rate, in our opinion.

Mr. *Burt.*

1839. I do not want to follow up the question of sacrificed men, as they are called, in fact I do not think it was put otherwise by Mr. Patterson and Mr. Wilson than that the relationship generally between employers and workmen is on the whole very satisfactory, and I am quite prepared to believe that there are very few cases in which men are dismissed simply for taking an active part in connexion with the Union. But with regard to the dismissal of men for loss of time, I think it was given in evidence by Mr. Patterson that in some of the cases that they had investigated in which men had been dismissed for loss of time they found that two or three fortnights prior to the dismissal they had worked 10 days. You would not yourself consider that if a man has worked 10 days in a fortnight he should be dismissed for loss of time?—No, I think I said in reply to Mr. Balfour that I should not do so. I should be very glad indeed if I could get my men to work 10 days.

1840. I would not like to press you, but I would like to follow up Mr. Balfour's question and ask you whether you do not think that with regard to questions of that sort it would be desirable to have some general agreement that if a man had worked 10 days per fortnight he should not be dismissed for loss of time?—I am quite sure the colliery owners in Durham would be very glad to come to an understanding with the miners' executive that the men who work an average of 10 days in a fortnight shall not be dismissed.

1841. That is not quite the way I put it?—That a man shall not be discharged for leaving work if he has worked 10 days in a fortnight.

1842. He may be a big sinner in other respects and that may justify his dismissal, but that he shall not be dismissed for that cause if he has worked 10 days a fortnight. Would it not be desirable to have some agreement between the two associations to prevent friction?—It depends how you make the agreement. I think there would be a great deal of difficulty in coming to an arrangement between the miners' executive and the colliery owners as to what that should be, but I am quite sure that the coal owners would be willing to agree not to dismiss a man for neglecting his work if he had worked 10 days in a fortnight.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

1843. At present it is left entirely to the discretion of the managers?—Yes.

1844. And I suppose the managers are not all perfect any more than the miners?—I presume not.

Mr. *Trow.*

1845. With regard to your joint committee, how are the various collieries represented?—There are a certain number of representatives chosen by the present association as members of that committee.

1846. But at the commencement of your evidence you said that the representatives were treated in the same manner as ordinary workmen?—I thought you referred to the coal owners' representatives.

1847. You said that the representatives of the workmen are treated in the same manner as other workmen. I want to see how your joint committee works. There is only a specified number elected by the association on the joint committee?—Yes.

1848. Then how are the coal owners represented on it individually. What kind of a representation has the colliery itself?—Well, the system is this. The Coal Owners' Association at their annual meeting elect a certain number of men to serve on that committee. The miners' executive also have representatives on that committee of an equal number to ours. I do not know how they elect them. The chairman acts as chairman. The colliery owner, if he brings a case, sends notice of the case to the secretary of the committee a certain number of days prior to the hearing. That is notified to the miners' officials of the colliery, whether the executive of the men or the executive of the owners, and there is time for them, after the receipt of that notice, to put in any counter-claim as against the original claim. Then it comes on for hearing. The colliery manager advocates his own case, and the miners' executive of the local lodge advocate the miners' case. The owner or the other party have a reply. Then it is adjudicated upon by the members of the committee; if they disagree it is decided by the chairman.

1849. But what I wanted to arrive at was this. You want to make the joint committee as powerful as possible, and as beneficial as possible, and you said yourself more cases ought to be settled at the collieries. Now the cases can only be settled at the collieries by one of the workmen at the special colliery being appointed as a representative, and his right to attempt to settle

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

recognise differently from the way in which you recognise other men?—No.

1850. To begin with how is the submission put in?—It is done in this way. If a dispute arises with a workman as to rate of wages, or whatever it may be, it is taken before the local lodge of the association. The local lodge consider it, and if they approve of the claim a deputation, consisting probably of the secretary or of the officials of that lodge, with the persons affected, meet the manager of the colliery and endeavour to settle it. If it cannot be settled then it is sent to the joint committee.

1851. But would it not be more beneficial and more likely to effect a settlement or to prevent a refusal to carry out a settlement if one of the men at that special colliery was recognised by the colliery owners as being authorised to represent the men, and that the submission should be sent to the joint committee signed by the representative of the owners and the representative of the workmen?—I think the representative that you refer to is now the secretary of the local lodge.

Mr. *Dale.*

1852. He is so recognised?—He is very largely recognised in that way.

Mr. *Trow.*

1853-4. But what I want to get at is this. If he is to be dealt with as other men his power as a representative is nil. When he is acting as the representative of the men he must be treated as representing the whole body of the men, and his power recognised as the representative, he must not be dealt with as other men; he is the man who can make a settlement with you, and no other.

Mr. *Dale.*

I almost think you misapprehended what Mr. Wood meant when he said that the miners' local secretary was treated as other men were treated. He means that being a workman of the colliery he is subject to the ordinary rules of the colliery, and would only be dismissed by the colliery for some breach of those rules, and would not be singled out for dismissal because he was a representative of the union. He said "treated like other men" in that sense. He was not speaking of treatment such as you are now alluding to, *i.e.*, of recognition as a spokesman.

Mr. *Trow.*

I thank you for that, because I have been led by the previous evidence to believe that he would be treated in all cases as an ordinary workman.

Mr. *Dale.*

1855. Mr. Wood, when you spoke of the local lodge secretary being treated as other men you did not mean to imply that he would not be recognised as the spokesman of the men in

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

matters under negotiation?—Most certainly not.

1856. And as a matter of fact I suppose he is so recognised?—Yes, he is.

Mr. *Trow.*

1857. I am not referring to the sacrificed men?—The coal owners are perfectly willing to meet, and do meet, all their men individually or collectively when they have got any difference so that really he is treated in both cases in exactly the same way.

1858. Let me carry it a little further. Even should this representative for a breach of the rules of the colliery be dismissed should he not owing to his position have the right of appeal to the committee. I am not denying your right to dismiss a man. I recognise that if I am dissatisfied with your employment I have a right to give you the customary notice, and if you are dissatisfied with me you have the right to give me notice. I recognise that right on both sides. But if a man who is acting as the representative of the men is dismissed for a breach of the rules, which justifies his dismissal, would it not tend to give more satisfaction if that man had the right of appeal to the joint committee, and the joint committee said "the firm were justified in dismissing you"?—I do not think it would tend that way, and I think it would do away with the whole principle on which you agree.

1859. No, I am recognising that principle.

Mr. *Dale.*

We must not have the question argued; you must elicit from the witness by way of question any fact or any opinion that you desire to draw out.

Mr. *Trow.*

The men fancy that the man has been dismissed for the action he has taken. If there is no right of appeal the men remain under that misapprehension; would it not be better if the man had the right to appeal to the joint committee, and the joint committe were to justify his dimissal?—I do not say that it would, but I may say, with respect to that, that very frequently when a case of that sort has occurred in which there has been a doubt and I should think probably that doubt arose through the man applying to the miners' executive as a sacrificed member, the particulars of his dismissal have been furnished to the miners' executive for their private information upon that matter.

1860. In Cleveland the man has a right of appeal and we have no sacrificed men. Now with regard to your joint committee it is a large district and there are a large number of cases; has not your committee a power if necessary to appoint for its members a sub-committee and to give it the authority to settle the question without appealing to the arbitrator?—By an agreement on both sides special meetings are very often held to wipe off accumulations of cases.

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

—I cannot name any specific case, but my impression is that I have heard cases before the association of that character.

1876. Are you quite clear upon the point?—I am clear upon the point that there have been allegations brought by the owners against the men for not continuing to work under an award, but I think they are very exceptional cases.

1877. Some questions were put by Mr. Trow as to whether it would not be desirable that some agreement should be come to by which a man, recognised as the representative of his association, should be placed in a somewhat more favoured position, as to his not being dismissed, under circumstances under which an ordinary workman would certainly be dismissed, by the employer?—I do not think that would be at all satisfactory. Of course this checkweighman cannot be dismissed by the owner unless he does something he is not authorised to do by the Act.

1878. He is a single individual?—As a rule he is the representative of the miners' lodge of that particular colliery. He is generally the chairman or secretary of that lodge.

1879. Is that a necessary consequence, or is it not perhaps a chance circumstance?—He is generally selected as the checkweighman because he is an official of the union. It is very often the case that that is so.

1880. The checkweighman, I presume from the name, is one over whose weighbridge, I suppose, the product of each man's work passes?—Just so.

1881. To be noted for payment?—Yes: and he has the right, by the Mines Inspection Act, to be present to see that that weight is correct, although he cannot interfere.

Mr. *Dale.*

1882. He is not the weigher, but he is the checkweigher?—He is the checkweigher.

Sir *E. Harland.*

1883. Assume an instance where the representative of the Trades Association or Union chanced not to be in that position, which might be considered somewhat in the nature of a Government official position, do you think it would conduce to the discipline of the work of the mine generally if such a representative had some special personal consideration given to him to protect him, or to ensure him against being dismissed, in the way in which the same employer would have dismissed any other workman for similar reasons?—I do not think it would be conducive to the discipline of the colliery to do so.

1884. Do you think that such a one would be disposed, unless he were paid by piece-work, to pay the same attention to his work in such a position, as he would otherwise if he were in not so independent a position?—I think it would probably be conducive to his not attending so regularly to the work. We find that men who are appointed on the Durham executive, the general executive of the association, attend to their work very badly indeed. Some men are off the work sometimes for a week or a fortnight together, but when it is known that they are actually being employed for the executive at Durham, it is not taken any notice of by the colliery owners, and they continue to supply them with their houses and their coal during the time.

1885. I suppose such men will lose the work if they are at piece-work?—They lose their own work, but the advantage of their work is also lost to the colliery owner.

1886. So that you think that is a hard case upon the colliery owner?—It is undoubtedly.

1887. That did not exist, I presume, before these trade associations became so combined, and, shall I use the expression, so powerful, in the direction of their own interests?—It did not occur before these combinations took place.

1888. And consequently you, on the other hand, have been driven into similar associations in order to support your interests in the matter?—Yes, that was necessary.

1889. In other words, the one class of association has begotten the other?—Yes.

1890. You referred to a difficulty in one or other of the parties, in case of breaking through an agreement, not being able, by law or otherwise, to be compelled or induced to adhere to their agreement. Would anything in the shape of a money deposit from both parties, in the hands of some independent person, tend to induce either party to stand to his agreement, failing which he would be liable to forfeit an agreed proportion of this deposit?—I think it would. I think, as I said previously, that compensation would be a great inducement to the carrying out of the awards.

1891. Something in the shape of cash in hand?—Yes, if we could not trust each other.

1892. I am assuming a case where that trust has failed. Then some other course would be desirable, say cash in the hands of some independent party?—Yes, that would be one way. Practically the having to pay compensation, however the money is paid, or whom by, would, I think, be an inducement to the carrying out of the awards.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

1893. You were asked a question as to the dismissal of men for breach of colliery rules, and I think you said that you objected to any appeal from your decision in such a case as that. Did that apply to special and general rules?—To both, whether the rules enforced by the Mines Regulation Act or to the rules in force for the general discipline of the colliery. If the owner cannot enforce those rules the discipline of the colliery must go down, and the discipline of the colliery is a thing essential to the carrying on of the work.

1894. I think there are two clauses in the Mines Regulation Act which make it obligatory upon the owner to enforce those rules, are there not?—Yes.

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

1895. Would that be one of your grounds for saying that you must have the dismissal absolutely in your own hands?—I think it is, because we are held penally liable for carrying out these rules, and therefore it is essential that we should have the means of carrying them out.

1896. With regard to arbitration, I think you said that you considered that there ought to be power in case of non-conformity to an award to enforce that, and you suggested that should be out of the funds on either one side or the other?—I think that would be the means of enforcing the carrying out of the award.

1897. Do you think that could be done except by Act of Parliament?—I do not think it will be done by general agreement between the two associations.

1898. Would you go so far as to say you think there ought to be an Act of Parliament for it?—I think that there ought to be some legal means of stopping the non-carrying out of awards.

1899. The question rather suggests itself that possibly in the case of a weak owner or a weak association there might not be funds to pay the compensation: if so, could it be dealt with except by an Act of Parliament?—Even in the case of an Act of Parliament there would be difficulty in dealing with such cases, because if there are no funds the Act of Parliament could not get them.

1900. You said that in 1885 the union men refused to ride in a cage with non-union men; does that difficulty still exist?—I have known cases which have occurred only last week. A man who is a union man went into the station where the lamps are examined before the men go to their work; his lamp was examined first, and he went to his work. The men stopped the colliery and said that unless he was discharged they would not go to work again, because he had gone in before the rest of the men had got their lamps examined. The owner of the colliery said, "Rather than have any dispute about it I "will set you on to another class of work: stone "work or shift work." The stone men and shifters held a meeting, and said "You shall not set that "man on to shift work." The colliery was stopped by a general resolution, that unless the man was discharged, the colliery would be idle, and it has been idle for three or four days. I think it has gone to work now, on condition of the man going down into the pit by himself with the last cage.

1901. Do you think the object is in order to force the rest of the men into the union?—Yes.

1902. Do you think it is fair that a man should be forced into the union, or a master into an association, either one or the other, against his will?—No, I do not think it is. I think a man ought to have free choice.

Sir *E. Harland.*

1903. Would it be as unfair as it would be in the case of an employer who had declined to be a member of your association, and who was coming to London by train to take orders that an objection should be made to his going in the same train to London with you?—Yes, I think it would be even a worse case, because in that case I should have to go out of the train, and let him go.

1904. You think at any rate there would be a similar amount, not to say of hardship, but of ungenerous action on the part of the association to refuse to come to London in the same carriage with one who had declined to be a member of your association?—It would be practically the same thing.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

1905. One question respecting the difference of method in Northumberland and Durham with regard to referring cases to a joint committee. I think you stated that one reason why there were so many cases before the Durham joint committee than before the Northumberland joint committee is because in Durham, in the case of a single flat, even if that is below the county average, they have a right to call upon the joint committee to deal with that case; but in the case of Northumberland the whole seam must be below the county average before it can be submitted?—That is so, I think.

1906. Has the system that now obtains in Northumberland been in vogue in Durham at all?—No, it has not. Each seam had to be below the average of the county before it could be arbitrated upon.

1907. That is not the entire pit, but each seam?—No, the pit may consist of more than one seam.

1908. I had intended to ask a question or two concerning the hours, but I think there is a definite understanding that an entire statement will be presented, dealing with each section of workers, the number of hours per day or per shift, and the number of men under each department?—I understood that I had to furnish a list, or rather an extra column to the list I had already furnished, showing each class of work, the wage in 1879, and the present wage; and the hours worked in 1879, and the hours worked in 1891 of each class. You want, I understand, another column added to this, showing the number of persons employed in each class.

1909. This gives each class and the daily hours?—Yes.

1910. That is to say, in the case of winding engine men, they run to 12 per day?—No; winding engine men work eight hours, generally speaking. There are a few instances where the engines are very small, where they work 12 hours. That is by special arrangement with the Enginemen's Association. The majority of winding engine men work eight hours.

1911. Some are 12, but the majority eight?—Yes.

1912. Would the pumping and fan engine men, who work 11 hours a shift, make six shifts a week or seven?—The fan engine men will have their seven days.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

1913. Seven days a week?—Yes.

1914. Fourteen a fortnight?—14 a fortnight. The fan engine must run; it must never stop.

1915. I should like your opinion as to whether it would not be more desirable to have two shifts than three shifts, seeing they are continuous?—I do not think so. A fan engine-man has nothing whatever to do, but simply sit still and go to sleep practically. The engine runs by itself, and he seldom has anything to do with it, never touches it except to put a little oil into the oil-cups. Therefore the labour of doing that is practically nominal.

1916. The physical exertion is undoubtedly not very great, but he is responsible; he is away from home, and he is under the control of the colliery proprietor?—He must be either at or about the engine-house, certainly.

1917. Are any steps being taken to get the hours of these men reduced?—The question of reduction of hours has been discussed frequently, but there is nothing under consideration at the present moment.

1918. In your opinion is it not a pressing matter?—No, I do not think so. They are generally men who are not high class men, because the work they have to do is practically nothing.

1919. Respecting the opinion you have expressed as to the advisability of making the decisions binding by a fine or something stronger that would bring us very close to a state board of arbitration, would it not?—No. Are you suggesting a state board of arbitration instead of an ordinary arbitration?

1920. I intended asking whether or not you would be in favour of a state board of arbitration that should step in where existing voluntary boards or joint committees failed?—I think it would be better that the rules of the association should be altered so as to make the enforcement of their decisions compulsory rather than that there should be a state board; because my impression is that a state board would know very little of the circumstances of the case, and it would be very difficult to get the details and practical part of it thoroughly understood by a state board.

1921. But you wish that there should be such modification of the existing rules, that they would become financially involved by a contribution, in short, either from one side or the other?—Yes, I thought that would be conducive to the carrying out of the awards. I do not, at present, know any other means by which it could be done.

1922. Of course it is conceivable that a number of awards would, even then, be disputed; that they would rather pay the fine on many occasions?—It is possible, but I think it would reduce the numbers.

1923. In any case you are not inclined to go further, and say that you would favour something in the nature of a state board of arbitration, which, when the parties had agreed to abide

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

it, would make it compulsory by law?—If you had a state arbitration you would have to re-arbitrate the whole thing before that state board of arbitration.

1924. Yes, it would necessitate that, I think?—Then, I think, that would be objectionable. The present way that we have of endeavouring to enforce the joint committee arbitrations is, that if in a certain colliery the employers or the men refuse to carry out the decision of the joint committee, no other cases are heard from that colliery until they have carried out the decision.

1925. That already exists, no matter what side?—No matter what side. But we find the collieries take the law in their own hands, and strike and stop the colliery if their cases are objected to.

1926. So that really, although that is a rule, nevertheless disputes take place, and cessations of work take place?—Cessations of work take place due to this.

1927. I was thinking of the evidence that has been given by the employed, and the evidence which has been given to-day, which is confirmatory of that, showing that whilst there is relatively a good understanding existing between yourselves, the employers, and the workmen's associations, nevertheless the difficulties are very numerous and considerable, much annoyance must be caused to both sides, and therefore, although it may be said that relatively a good understanding exists, it is also true to say that it is a very imperfect understanding; and I was anxious to understand how far you would go in the matter of an arbitration board that should be possessed of greater powers than those you have at present, or even than those you have suggested, which would simply mean a slight modification of existing rules, which would not bind any one very seriously if they preferred to pay a few pounds?—The state arbitration board would have to enforce it by some means if that is not done by a fine it would have to be done by imprisonment or some other means and I do not propose there should be imprisonment. If the power of fining were given to the local arbitration board it would be equally powerful as if given to the state board of arbitration.

1928. What do you think about the moral influence?—I do not think there would be much moral effect if it were a state board than exists in the case of a local arbitration board.

1929. I was anxious to understand how far you would say it was desirable that there should be something even greater than the fine; but I understand you would not advise anything stronger than a fine mutually agreed upon?—No, I should not like to advocate anything stronger, because I do not know what you can have stronger than penalties. You cannot put a whole colliery of men, or members of an association, in prison. Of course as the Durham Miners' Association consists of 70,000 members a small contribution from each will reach a very large sum of money. Individual members would

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

enforce their decision much more freely than they have done. I have the case of a colliery on strike at the present moment, which has been on strike six weeks, and no decision has yet been come to by the Durham Miners' Association as to whether the men of that colliery are right or wrong. The colliery owners for the last six weeks have had to pay their contributions, and yet I think if there had been a money fine imposed upon the association the probability is that the association would have taken steps to come to a decision upon that matter before six weeks had elapsed.

1930. What has caused this special dispute?—The dispute arises from a deputy who is considered not to be sufficiently good to perform his duty, or rather made a transgression in his duties, and the owners declined to employ him any longer as supervisor for the safety of the men. They offered him other work which would have relieved him of that responsibility. The men said, "No, you shall employ this man as "supervisor of the safety of the rest of the men." The owners say, "No, we will not do that, "because we do not think he is competent to do "so." The colliery is now on strike, and has been on strike, and at the present moment, I believe, the miners' executive of Durham have not come to a decision as to whether the men are, in their opinion, right in striking for the re-employment of the man as an official of the colliery or not.

1931. One question respecting the man in the lamp-room that was served with a lamp in the first instance. Did I understand you to say that he was a union man?—He was a union man.

1932. And was still a union man, as far as you know, when the dispute took place?—Yes.

1933. But you did not make it clear to us why the union men should object to him?—The reason they objected to him leaving sooner than the others was that they thought all the men should go down together, and should sit down at those resting places, and they should all leave together. He, I suppose, wanted to get to his work, and, being the first man down, got his lamp examined and went to his work.

1934. So that was not an illustration of union men *versus* non-union men; and therefore the remarks that followed upon that scarcely bore upon it?—That is the case.

1935. Have you many troubles now respecting union men and non-union men refusing to work together?—There are not very many at the present moment. I believe nearly all the men have been required to join the union. There are cases very often cropping up of men who have not paid their contributions and the other men objecting.

1936. It would be interesting and perhaps helpful to know how far your experience would show that the employers get on better when there is a large proportion of men organised, or with a relatively small proportion of the men organised?—Seeing that we have to deal with the miners' executive as a whole and the local lodges as part of that body, I should rather see the whole of the men under the government of those bodies with which we have to deal rather than have other men out of that union with which we have to deal separately.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

Mr. *Livesey.*

1937. I am afraid from what you have told us that there is a good deal of tyranny practised by certain men in your district; you do not seem to get on very happily with the unions and the men?—So far as the union goes, I think we get on very well; but there is no doubt that there are a great number of local disputes and local troubles we have to contend with.

1938. But is it the fact that the men are not controlled by the executive of the union as they ought to be?—They are certainly not controlled by the executive of the union as I should like to see them by any means.

1939. And probably as the executive would wish?—I am quite sure of that. I think the executive would be much more easily worked if the men were more amenable to their decisions. I think, as a rule, I have no great reason to complain of the decisions of the executive.

1940. The executive deal fairly?—I think so.

1941. The difficulty is with the men?—Yes.

1942. Have you had any objections or difficulties raised by other unions; have you had anything like a federation of unions against you?—I do not think they have affected the coal trade much. The other unions have to a certain extent affected some of the modes of conveyance. Where we have private railways and shipping, those have been to a certain extent interfered with by other unions. The National Federation got some of our men into it, and we had to deal with two classes of unions.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

1943. That is a federation that has its centre at Newcastle?—Yes.

Mr. *Austin.*

1944. I think you stated that in last year there were no less than 86 disputes or strikes covering a period of 354½ days?—In 1890 we had 86 strikes and stoppages of works comprising 354½ days.

1945. How many firms were affected by these 86 stoppages or strikes?—I do not think I could give you the number. There may have been one or two or even three or more strikes occur at the same firm.

1946. Can you give me the number of collieries affected?—No, I could not give you the collieries, but there are only 48 firms in the whole association, so that there must have been more than one strike on an average at each firm.

1947. You state, I think, that the representatives of the men and the representatives of the Owners' Association generally got on well together;

Mr. *Austin*—continued.

do you think it advisable that the operations of the joint committee should be extended to these local disputes?—The joint committee deals only with the local disputes.

1948. Were those 86 disputes brought before the joint committee?—I think some of them were, and the decisions were not carried out; and, therefore, a stoppage took place. I have not by me the list of disputes which took place. It does not follow that a stoppage of a colliery may not take place although the question in dispute has been brought before the joint committee. In many cases the award of the joint committee is not carried out, and the men refuse to carry it out, and a strike or stoppage takes place.

1949. What was the general cause of these disputes?—I have not here the causes of all the disputes in 1890. I have only those that have been given in this printed form which was handed in in our reply. There was a strike in 1890, at Monkwearmouth, with respect to nine hours as being the maximum day's work for the hewers working under ground. That lasted 18 weeks. There was another strike where the manager refused to meet checkweighers on deputation. That lasted six days. The men refused to draw cavils unless certain acquisitions were granted. That lasted 10 days. The putters were dissatisfied with the amount of their wages. That lasted five days. The men were dissatisfied with the prices fixed by an award of the joint committee. That lasted six days. The putters laid the pit idle without assigning any reason, and afterwards put forward a question as to whether a boy should be a putter or a hewer. That lasted three days. Then there was a long strike of 18 weeks at Silksworth Colliery, where the men demanded that the deputy should be compelled to join the Miners' Union. Then there is a case of gas in the mine; the men alleging that the place was not safe, that lasted nine days. Then there was a case when the men were on strike to enforce the reduction of working hours, and that lasted six days.

1950. In connexion with those disputes, was there any effort made at arbitration when the men could not agree?—I do not think in any of those cases there was arbitration. They were all cases which either could not be settled by arbitration, or ought to have been brought before the arbitration of the joint committee.

Sir *E. Harland.*

1951. With reference to the answers which you gave to some questions put to you by Mr. Mann, in which the suggestion that possibly some state arbitration might be brought to bear in matters of dispute, do you think that the award in a case of that kind, supposing it happened to go against a workman, would be worth the paper it was written on, in the way of producing some money compensation to the employer who had been injured?—I fail to see any reason why it should be better carried out than in the case of local arbitration. My impression is that the local people will be more likely to come to a true decision than a state board of arbitration.

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

1952. Have you, in any case of a local decision, received a money payment from the Trade Union for some inquiries supposed to have accrued to your business?—Not from the general association. We have recovered compensation from the particular men at the colliery in some cases.

1953. What form did this compensation take: was it in the shape of money, wages stopped, or what was it?—It was a fine imposed. Cases had been taken before the magistrates for breach of contract for quitting their work without notice, and compensation has been claimed and compensation has been paid.

1954. And what was the largest amount of compensation that you in your experience have heard of as being paid?—I should think 5*s.* or 6*s.* a man, or something of that sort.

1955. What was the total amount?—I should think the very largest would be 200*l.*, or something of that sort, but I am speaking without book.

1956. You made a suggestion, I think, to the effect that money might be deposited by both parties in the hands of an independent person to be awarded in case the decision was not conformed to; did you contemplate that that should be a small amount which might be spoken of as a fine?—No, I think it should be more than that. A stoppage at a small colliery for one or two days amounts only to a small sum of money, but if you had to enforce it through the general associations it would have to apply to a much larger area of stoppage of work, and therefore the amount would be much larger.

1957. A suggestion was made, I think, by Mr. Mann, that perhaps, it might be worth the while of the men to pay the fine rather than abide by the award?—I do not see how the fine could be arrived at until the men had gone to work.

1958. I presume you mean something rather more tangible, something which would cover in each case the amount actually lost by the parties interested?—I think the compensation ought to represent the loss sustained by either party caused by the stoppage of work.

1959. And having regard to the nature of the undertaking, the large amount of capital invested, and the work involved, might not the amount in some cases reach a very considerable sum?—Yes, it would, no doubt.

Mr. *Burt.*

1960. With regard to the payment of fines by the workmen after they have refused to abide by the decision of the joint committee, have any such fines ever been imposed and not been paid?—There have been fines imposed, and in some cases, by the consent of the owners, they have not been paid; they have been remitted as it were.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

1961. Is it the custom for the joint committee to impose fines?—No, they have no power whatever to impose fines. I thought you were referring to the decisions of the magistrate.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. Frank Stobart called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

1962. You reside in the county of Durham?—I do.

1963. You are the agent of Lord Durham, and in addition to having the control of his property there, you have also the control of his considerable collieries in the county of Durham?—Yes. I am also part owner of collieries in the county.

1964. Your family are also large owners in the county of Durham?—Yes.

1965. And you are a member of the Durham Coal Owners' Association?—I am.

1966. You have heard the evidence given by Mr. Wood, and may we take it that you generally agree with and confirm the statements he has made?—I generally agree with Mr. Wood; but I think he is somewhat too sanguine about the relations between our association and the miners. I think there is a very great danger indeed of all negotiations becoming broken off between the two associations on account of the leaders of the Miners' Union not having command over their men. This has latterly, I think, been very much more the case than formerly. When the Miners' Association was first started the men I think almost invariably obeyed the rulings of their executive, but we have very many cases now in which they do not obey the executive, and I think that is tending to break off negotiations between the two associations. In fact, last year I think there was a meeting between our association and the Miners' Association at which attention was called to the serious stoppages that were occurring at collieries on account of joint committee awards not being carried out, and on account of men at collieries, instead of going to the joint committee for the settling of disputes, striking and causing these collieries to lay idle instead of going to the proper tribunal, the joint committee.

1967. I do not propose to ask you questions which have been asked of and answered by Mr. Wood, but I would rather invite you to supplement the evidence given by him by anything you may think desirable?—If it will be of interest to the Commission I shall be glad to show you the proportions of men at the Lambton Collieries who are engaged underground and at other works; and I can give you the proportions of the men at our largest collieries, who are working 10 hours and who are working shorter hours.

1968. The evidence you are about to give relates to the collieries of Lord Durham under your control?—Entirely.

1969. They may be taken as being fairly representative of similar proportions throughout the county of Durham of different classes of men and the hours of work?—I think so. First of all I may state that the total output last year of coal and fire clay, was 2,130,217 tons. This was produced by 2,521 hewers, and we had other workmen underground, that is, shifters, rolleyway men, and other workmen, 2,125. These include boys over 16. Then of boys under 16 there were 503. That makes a total underground of 5,149 men and boys. Then above ground we have screenmen and workmen on the surface, and also boys over 16, whom I include as men, to the number of 1,055, and the boys under 16, 114, making a total of 1,169 above ground. Then I have further the coke yards, where we had 55 men employed. Then we have some other works which are connected with the collieries, such as fire-brick work, repairing shops, and so on, and there we had 227 men employed, and 62 boys, making a total of 289. These make a grand total of 6,662 men and boys.

1970. Does that include the men on Lord Durham's private railway?—That includes the men on the private railway. We have running powers over the North-eastern; we have not a very large private railway. That also includes the men at the docks. I have not taken out altogether the different men that were employed over the eight hours a day, and those that were employed less, but we have divided our collieries into three groups, and this is the largest group. At this group we have 1,438 hewers. These are men that are, on an average, seven hours down in the mine. Then we have officials. That includes the deputies, whose average hours are seven and a half; the officials, of course, have no fixed hour at all; by officials I mean over-men. Then we have 543 shifters; they work eight hours. Waste men, we have 114 at these collieries; they also work eight hours. Then we have the men and boys that work over that. The putters over 16 are 221. The drivers, flat boys, &c., are 116. Those are all under 16. The hours of the putters are 10. Then we have offhand men, 175. Then there are rolleyway men, and such like, who work 10 and 10½ hours, and of boys under 16, 274. I do not know that I need give you the different divisions of the men above ground which include joiners, fitters, engine men, firemen, &c. Of those there are 512, and of boys under 16 there are 47. Then there are 68 masons and others. Fire-brick works, 39; boys under 16, 10. Coke burners, 35.

1971. On what points would you like to supplement the evidence of Mr. Wood?—I do not know whether it would be of any interest to

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

the Commission to have some evidence with regard to the benefits to the workmen. We do not subscribe at our collieries to the permanent relief fund, but we have three local colliery relief funds, the object of which is to grant relief to members during sickness,—accident, superannuation, and burial funds. This fund is entirely managed by a president and committee of workmen. They have a capital of 5,308*l.*, which is in the hands of Lord Durham, and on which he pays 4 per cent. interest. The contributions of the men are 6*d.*, and of the boys 3*d.* per week. Then Lord Durham, as owner of the collieries, contributes one-sixth of the members' contributions. Then all fines from workmen for coal "laid out" and "set out," and fines of every kind at the colliery, are given by Lord Durham to the workmen's fund. I think that is a very good principle, because then there can be no grievance in any reduction for "laid out" and "set out." The total amounts contributed to the fund during 1889 were, by the workmen 1,450*l.*, and by the owner 755*l.*, making a total of 2,205*l.*, and the amount paid out to members and widows during the same period was 2,402*l.* Of course there was some interest on the money in hand, which accounts for the difference. The members receive from this fund during sickness, &c., for the first 26 weeks 9*s.*, or in some cases 8*s.* 6*d.* a week, and the boys 4*s.* 6*d.* a week. After the first 26 weeks they are paid half of these sums. Old members past work are paid similar amounts to those I have mentioned. Then there are death legacies in the case of a man or wife, of 5*l.* or 4*l.*, and of children 2*l.* 10*s.* or 2*l.* Then we have, beyond that, pensions. In case of deserving old men, having been a very long time on the colliery, they are given pensions.

1972. At discretion?—At discretion. I think perhaps this is rather a mistake, because it does not tend to make a man very provident. During last year we paid 990*l.* in pensions to old workmen and widows in our collieries. This is a perfectly gratuitous payment. In addition to this, any widow of any man who has been killed at the colliery is given a free house, coals, and water for the rest of her life, or until she marries.

1973. That is not expressed in the 990*l.*?—No, it is in addition to the 990*l.* We have 144 old workmen past work, and widows of workmen are allowed free houses, coals, and water, and there are a further number of 106 who are granted free coals.

1974. Are you a member of the joint committee for the Durham Coal Owners' Association?—No, I am not.

1975. As a member of the association itself you have opportunities of observing the work of that joint committee and of seeing any weaknesses that there may be in its operation?—I am a member of the urgency committee, and any dispute arising from the decisions of the joint committee not being carried out, comes before this urgency committee of the Coal Owners' Association.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

1976. Would you like to add anything to what Mr. Wood has stated in regard to the work of the joint committee?—Yes, I have a good deal to add. If I may be allowed I would like to give you my own experience of our own collieries in regard to strikes, and then I would like to speak of some special cases that have come under my notice as a member of the urgency committee. We have been fortunate I think in not having many strikes at our collieries. In 1880 there was a strike at three of our pits lasting two weeks. The cause of the strike was, the union men refusing to ride with non unionists. The result of that strike was that the men returned to work without their demand being granted, but the demand was afterwards granted. The dispute first of all arose in this way. There was one man who was a non-unionist who got into the cage. The cage is divided into divisions. One part of the cage goes down before the other. The bottom lift of the cage was filled with union men and went down, and then the next deck of the cage came up to the level of the heap side, and this non-unionist man got in. The other men on the heap refused to get in with him. The engine men left the cage where it was, and the non-unionist would not get out. The cage stood two hours. The men below could not get out and the non-unionist would not get out, and the cage stood for two hours in the shaft, and then the back-shift men went home. The checkweighman came up to the non-unionist and said, if he did not get out of the cage he would put a knife into him. The checkweighman was afterwards summoned and sent to gaol. The rest of the men who should have got into this special deck of the cage with the non-unionist all went home and the cage was lowered to the bottom of the pit. The men got out then and immediately got into another cage and rode back again. The colliery without any notice of any kind (and 14 days' notice ought to have been given) went on strike. Two other of our neighbouring collieries went on strike also from the same cause. We were supported by the association and the men went to work after some two weeks. Some rather longer. Shortly afterwards, for the sake of peace, we granted that the non-unionist should ride, not as the men wished, first, before the other men went down, they generally ask that non-unionists should ride first so that all the other men shall see who the non-unionists are, we agreed that the men should ride in the last cage, after the union men had gone down. That is the only strike that we have had of any importance for the last 10 years.

1977. What was the date of that?—That was in 1880. We had one pit off one day in 1884, one in 1889, and one pit four days in 1890. All these strikes arose through the putters, that is the younger men leaving work without submitting their grievances, if they had grievances, to the decision of the joint committee of the coal trade. They took the law into their own hands, and struck, without going to the joint

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

committee. On December 15th, 1890, the putters laid idle at one of our pits refused to ride with a putter who they thought was not a member of their Union, having alleged that his contribution was in arrear, but on December 12th, that was before the strike occurred, he had paid up his contribution. The union officials neglected to strike his name from the list of those who were in arrears that was placarded on the heap. If a man is in arrear his name is put up on the heap. In that case the boy was summoned before the magistrate, and we claimed 20*s.* damages, which we got.

1978. 20*s.* each, you mean?—20*s.* each. Then there was a strike on February 23rd, 1891, one pit one day. The men laid the pit idle through sympathy with the men on strike at another colliery, belonging to another owner, where evictions were about to take place. We had no dispute of any kind with the men, but the men, to show their sympathy with this colliery, laid our pit idle. Then, with reference to the joint committee there have been several cases, one or two of which I would like to mention. We have a case in the Adelaide Colliery, where a decision was given by the joint committee. The owners complained of hewers delaying unnecessarily in going inbye. The decision of the joint committee was, that the hewers should not delay at the kist, but go inbye. Then at the next meeting of the joint committee the men asked an advance of wages, and, in accordance with the custom of the joint committee, when a decision that has been given by them is not carried out, either side can object to the case being heard. The owners in this case brought forward that the men were not carrying out this formal decision of the joint committee, and the case was moved off the board. In consequence of that the men have now given notice to quit their employment, because their case for the advance of wages was ruled off the board; that notice is now running. Then at Wingate Colliery the men struck work on the 16th February, without a previous intimation. On investigation by a committee of the owners, the following reasons were given:—First, "We want 13*s.* "ramble money illegally kept off two men." That, of course, is a joint committee business to settle. Second: "Two men were turned back "by the banksmen because they did not go down soon enough last baff Saturday." Third: "We are dissatisfied with the joint committee, "and are determined to abolish it on account of "their unjust rulings." It was found to be impossible to arrive at a settlement with the men, and summonses were issued against them. On the 25th February, before the hearing of the summonses, the work was unconditionally resumed; and on the application of the men for a compromise they were offered the alternative of paying 10*s.* each and costs. This, though at first agreed to, they afterwards refused to carry out. The cases were therefore taken before the magistrates and fines of 10*s.* and 6*s.* 6*d.* costs inflicted. A further difficulty occurred at this colliery on the 29th May (this is the dispute that is going on there now) when a number of men left their work because their picks had not been sent in to their places, and they refused to return, when the deputy offered to take the picks in. In consequence of this 14 days' notice was given to four men, and on the 6th June the whole of the men at the colliery handed in their notices demanding the withdrawal of the four already mentioned. They also claimed back money under an award for certain men who had left the colliery before the award was given and remission of fines in some cases in the recent summonses and other matters. A sub-committee was appointed to meet the miners' agents and the representatives of the workmen of the colliery and an agreement was arrived at by which the men were advised to withdraw the notices unconditionally and providing that on this being done the grievances should be at once inquired into. The men however declined to act on this agreement, and the colliery was laid idle on the 20th June on the expiration of the notices. No settlement has as yet been arrived at, although on June 30th the following resolution was signed by the owners, representatives, and the miners' executive: "The "Owners' Association and Miners' Executive can- "not agree to alter the rules of the two associa- "tions according to which the Wingate men "must return to work and allow all the cases "in dispute to be settled by a committee of the "Owners' and Miners' Associations."

1979. I think since then the delegates of the miners have been out to the colliery to try to get the men to work, but they have refused to go to work?—The three agents sent up by the executive did their best with the men, condemning their action most strongly, telling them they were entirely wrong, and would not receive one penny in support from the union; but this had no effect. They were as stubborn as ever in regard to the unconditional withdrawal of all notices. We have many cases occurring of this last kind.

1980. That last case is intended to show that although there exists in the county of Durham a joint committee to which these various local questions should come for decision, and whereby any particular suspension of work should be averted, yet occasionally, as in the particular instance given, that has proved fruitless, because of the refusal on the part of the men to obey the decision of the joint committee, or to be controlled by their executive?—Exactly, and in many cases the men take the law into their own hands at the collieries and instead of going to the joint committee for a settlement of the dispute, they go to the manager, and if they do not get what they want they lay the pit idle. I do think that the joint committee awards are as a rule loyally carried out. There are exceptions. I have looked at the minutes of this year, and I see that there are several cases in which the owners complain that the men have not carried out joint committee awards, and there are also two or three in which the men

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

complain that the owners have not carried out the awards.

1981. But the majority of the difficulties have arisen not from the men refusing to carry out the joint committee award, but from their practically refusing to go before the joint committee?—Exactly. I think that many cases might be settled with the managers, but I know of many cases in which men, and I daresay the managers too, have gone to the joint committee without trying to settle at home. I think it would be very much better if they did try to settle at home in many cases. If one looks at the joint committee minutes one finds that some collieries never have a case with the joint committee at all, while other collieries have any number of cases. I think, perhaps, some leaders of the men feel rather inclined to go to the joint committee. They rather like to go there. They get paid a shift for going, and they like it. Other men dislike it; they do not care about going, but will settle the matter at home if possible. I do not know that I have anything further to say about the joint committee.

1982. Have you any suggestion to make whereby these difficulties may be overcome?—I see no way out of it except, as Mr. Wood suggests, that any joint committee award not being carried out, we should have, on either side, some claim for damages, and also not only in cases of the joint committee awards, but where a colliery goes on strike without notice. Of course at present we can go to the magistrates and claim damages, but then probably the pit is laid idle another day when the case is being heard, and that does not do. I think we should be able on either side to come on the side that is wrong for damages for that.

1983. We heard, I think from Mr. Wood, that the Durham Coal Owners' Association, to which you belong, does compensate those of its members who sustain a strike for reasons approved by the association?—Yes.

1984. Your suggestion would almost amount to this, that instead of the owner so suffering from the strike being compensated by his own association, he should be compensated by the offending association?—And *vice versâ*.

1985. You think the fine should be paid by that association whose members fail to observe the award?—Yes. There is another difficulty that we have with the men very often. They restrict their work. Instead of going on strike they keep themselves within the letter of the law, and instead of hewing, say eight or 10 tubs per man, if they have a grievance they will restrict their workmen to two tubs a man. We have no power, I think, to summon them, and though we can appeal to the Miners' Association, I am afraid very often they have not the power to get anything done. There was a case this last month at a colliery where the men refused to draw the cavils unless a putter 21 years of age was given a cavil as a hewer. The management drew the cavils in the absence of the men, who refused to accept them, with the exception of four men who happened to draw their old cavils,

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

and stated that they would work on the old cavils and restrict their work to two tubs per day. This the owners would not allow, and the pit was idle; the four men referred to, however, went to work, but they only filled two tubs each per day. The men remained on strike until July 13th, when they resumed work on an agreement by which both parties were to revert to the condition of things existing before the strike, and the cavils to be re-drawn.

1986. What would have been about the proper number of tubs?—I cannot say at this colliery how many, but I should say at any rate five or six. I have several other cases which have occurred quite recently as to questions between unionists and non-unionists.

1987. We do not want to multiply cases of the same character; we only want to bring into light and prominence the extent to which the apparently excellent machinery for averting strikes has broken down?—I think that the machinery, excellent as it is, is breaking down because the executive committee have lost power to a very great extent over their members. This machinery is the only power that we have over the men to prevent strikes, and if that breaks down the whole thing is at end. This is a resolution which was handed to the Miners' Association by the owners, which I will read you, to show you how our relations last year were getting very strained:—"The owners' committee find it necessary to bring before the "Miners' Association for their immediate and "serious consideration the repudiation of joint "committee decisions by the members of their "association; the action of the workmen at "individual collieries without the concurrence "of the miners' executive; frequent strikes at "collieries without the matters in dispute being "brought before the tribunal to which, by the "rules of the two associations, all disputes "should be referred. The loss sustained by "the owners from these frequent violations "of the arrangement between the two associations is so serious that they must require the "miners' executive to at once take steps to have "it remedied, otherwise the amicable relation "which has hitherto existed between the two "associations will be seriously endangered." Then we had a meeting, but I do not think it came to very much.

1988. Is there any official record made of the result of that appeal?—We have a long list that was then submitted to the Miners' Association of all the different cases. I have not the record of what was done at the meeting, but I do not think it ended in very much. I think the Miners' Association said they were always anxious to do their best to see their decisions were carried out. I think that was the way that ended.

1989. Is there any other evidence you would like to volunteer?—There was the Silksworth strike, of which we have heard a great deal and that arose upon the question of the deputies belonging to the Miners' Association. Our association is very strongly of opinion that the deputies

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

which the men went to work was almost verbally the same as that. This is the agreement on which they went to work:—"It is "agreed that the Owners' Committee advise "the Silksworth deputies, who joined the Durham "Miners' Association after the notices were "handed in, to pay up at once their arrears of "subscriptions to the present date, on the "distinct understanding that they are to be at "perfect liberty from this date to be members "or non-members of the miners' or any other "association pending the settlement of the "general question of deputies between the two "associations." You see that is exactly the same as what we proposed a month before. They went to work on those terms, we having proposed precisely the same conditions before the evictions were started with. As far as I can make out, one reason why the men are so very anxious the deputies should be in the Miners' Association is that in case of strikes these deputies keep up the workings of the pit. For instance at Monkwearmouth the deputies were not stopped at their work during that long strike. Of course if the deputies belonged to the Miners' Association in case of a strike they would be ordered out, and strikes would become so expensive that the owners dare not face them. That is a strong reason, I have no doubt, why they wish the deputies to be members of their association. I think with regard to the strikes generally that if the miners would agree to leave full power in the hands of their executive it would be very seldom if ever we should have a strike. I believe the miners' executive, ever since it started, have been perfectly upright and honourable men, and have always done their best to avoid strikes. If the men would only trust in them I believe we should see the end of strikes almost entirely. Another thing which I think might prevent strikes a good deal would be if there were a better system of balloting before a strike commences. I may say that I mention this not only on behalf of the coal trade but for the marine engineering trade in which I am also interested, where exactly the same thing applies. As a rule before a colliery can go on strike there must be a majority of two-thirds, but the balloting takes place on the pit heap where the men are going to work and is conducted by union officials. I do not know with what truth, but I have frequently heard it alleged that the Miners' Union man will mark a great number of papers himself and put them into the box. Certainly he has power to do so. I am very strongly of opinion that if, before a strike, the ballot were conducted in the same way as at an election, we should have fewer strikes, and a much fairer expression of the opinion of the men than we have now. A great number of the men are married men with families, and they, as a rule, are averse to strikes. The young men, with no cares on their shoulders, and who probably do not know what a strike is, are perfectly ready to rush into it, and these are the men who generally vote. The others do not

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

so often vote. I think if there we system of balloting, it would tend strikes, not only in our trade, b engineering trade also. With reg sliding scale, I quite agree that is ver fairest way to regulate wages, because a certain amount of co-operation be owners and the men. As the price ris get their share, it may not be a fair under the sliding scale they have their profits. The difficulty, I think, has be prices of the day rise very much more r the actual realised price in the county. coal trade especially we are obliged, of foreign competition, to take long One does not like to do it, but one h very often, or lose the contract. Th are sometimes three years. Now if rapidly you have this old price r which keeps the average price of coal the men see the price going up an paper, and forget that the average re is lower than the price of the day. this equally applies when the prices You have long contracts running a of the day. These are the reasons why the men are dissatisfied with scale.

Lord *Hartington.*

1995. Do the miners' executive p powers over members of local associ refuse to carry out the joint committe or who refuse to submit disputes to t of the joint committee?—No. They power over them whatever. If a co on strike against their rules, they call together. First of all the miners' meet. Then the miners' executive, a understand—I may perhaps be he interfering with the miners' business settle a case. Then they issue a circula to all the different lodges. Each lo county sends up a representative to t Miners' Board to the general council this general council that settles colliery is to go on strike or not. Th executive may be very much against and may issue a circular advising the to support a strike. Then a colliery very often will send round represent that colliery to all the different lod the council's meeting, and try to influ before the council meet to vote that be supported. The miners' execut sorry to say, is sometimes not suppor council.

1996. If the council think the min particular case are wrong, what p they?—They have no power, except t they shall not receive anything from

1997. They can say that?—Yes referred to the colliery on strike a The council met last Saturday, and sa "men are not to be supported." The on strike now, and are not supported by the Miners' Association.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

time to examine the mine to see that it was perfectly safe. I think a great objection would be, on the part of the men, that it would lead to a very large increase in the out-put of coal, and I think also there would be a difficulty in this way, that you would want to have a great many other men, and boys also, which there would be a difficulty in getting.

2016. There is no way, in your opinion, of arranging the shifts either by having double shifts for the boys and treble shifts for the men, or a single shift of men and double shifts of boys, by which the boys' hours could be reduced?—They could only be reduced, I think, by working three shifts, that is, three shifts of hewers and two shifts of boys. It could be reduced in that way.

2017. And the men themselves would strongly object to that arrangement?—I think they would.

2018. They have given evidence that they would?—Yes, I have no doubt they would.

2019. With regard to the relations between the employers and employed, I gather that you are not quite so sanguine as Mr. Wood as to the permanence of the cordiality the present organisation has established. You do not think it will continue?—I fear not, unless the executive can get a better hold of their men. I do think that the executive, having come in contact more with the Owners' Association, and perhaps having seen that the devil is not so black as he is painted, are more reasonable. If it rested with them I think everything would be right; but they have lost that hold on the men that they used to have I think.

2020. The sum and substance of your evidence, then, is this, that an essential condition of peaceful relations is that the executive of the union should have control over its members?—Exactly. I should like to see the union stronger. I quite believe in unions, and I think we can far better deal with the men through a union than when they are not in a union; but I think that the men must have perfect confidence in their leaders.

2021. At present in Durham you think they have not perfect confidence in their leaders?—Judging by the strikes that are going on, I fear they have not.

Mr. *Burt.*

2022. You gave some figures at the beginning of your evidence including some relating to the persons employed more than eight hours. If I have totalled them correctly, I think there would be about 786?—I have not totalled them up.

2023. There were 221 putters?—Yes.

2024. I do not want to enter into detail further with regard to the putters; but are they mostly pony putters?—In our collieries they are. In many collieries they are nearly all hand putters.

2025. These figures relate only to your colliery?—Only to Lord Durham's colliery.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

2026. Then these 221 are mostly pony putters?—Yes.

2027. They would be youths ranging from 14 or 15, according to their size and strength, to perhaps 18 or 19?—18 or 19. I think those numbers I gave you were all above 16. I gave you those under 16 separately. These would be from 16 to 19.

2028. Are those some of the workers who are rather difficult to deal with?—Yes, the putters are the worst. When a boy gets to about 18 he thinks he is a man, and he is much more difficult to deal with than at any other time.

2029. The unions, I presume, also would feel equal difficulty in controlling these youths?—Undoubtedly. Often I have known strikes owing to these putters, when the men at the colliery have been against them.

2030. You mentioned some of the difficulties that there would be in shortening the hours of the boys. You would not hesitate to say, in fact I think you have said, that in itself it would be a desirable thing to have the hours of the boys reduced to eight per day if it could be managed?—I think if it could be managed it would be a good thing.

2031. In addition to some of the objections that you mentioned, would the workmen rather object to the increase in the number of persons employed at nights; is there any very strong feeling in Durham against night-shift work?—Yes; a very strong feeling indeed. Of course we have some collieries doing night-work. They are deep pits which it would be too expensive to carry on otherwise. They are working night-shift, but there is a strong, and I think a not unreasonable objection, to night-shifts.

2032. You made some observations with regard to balloting, in case of strikes, and I think I gathered from you that the Durham miners have a rule similar to one in operation in Northumberland, that a two-thirds majority shall be required before a strike can be declared?—Yes.

2033. And you mentioned that the balloting takes place on the pit heaps?—Yes.

2034. Are you speaking from personal knowledge when you state that?—I have never seen a ballot take place, but I have heard of them. I think I might add to what I said, that I think it would be better perhaps if it were not only two-thirds of the men who vote that would carry a strike but if it were two-thirds of the whole of the men in the union. I think that would be better, because then they would try to get as many men as possible to vote, and very often very few men will vote. On the question of a strike every man should vote, but some are frightened, or do not like the trouble of voting, and I think it would be a good rule if two-thirds of the whole men in a union should decide in favour of it. I should add that the vote very often takes place in the miners' lodge, but I believe sometimes it takes place at the pit heaps.

2035. Do you know whether the miners in Durham have a rule similar to one that the

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

Northumberland miners have, making it obligatory that an agent of the miners should attend the meeting, and see that the vote is actually by ballot?—That is so at a local strike, but when voting for the whole county of course you have not enough agents, I take it, to be present at every colliery.

2036. But I understood your observation to apply to local strikes?—I referred more especially to the whole county strike. At a local strike I believe it is the case that an agent attends always to the ballot.

2037. You have had rather a fortunate immunity from general strikes?—Since 1879 we have had several ballots. There were a good number of ballots for a general strike last year. They have not been carried, because the owners have given way. Since the sliding scale terminated the wages generally have been settled by the men asking us for an advance. We have offered something less. The men have declined. They ballot for a strike. They declare, of course, in favour of a strike, and come back again to the owners and say, "We have balloted for a strike." We offer a little more. The same process is gone through until we have offered enough.

2038. You mentioned that some of the boys and workmen work 10 hours; but I think you afterwards said that the hours were from bank to bank, was not that a slip?—It is from bank to bank.

2039. He is not actually working?—No, and they have time to get their meals, and very often they are not at work the whole time.

2040. With reference to the sick fund that you referred to; in case a man leaves the colliery, does he get returned to him his share, or any portion of the share of the money that may belong to him?—No, I think nothing, I have not studied the rules, but I think not.

2041. With reference to the Wingate strike, I think you said that the Miners' Association had decided not to support the men?—I believe so.

2042. So that in that respect it differs somewhat from the Silksworth Colliery?—It differs from Silksworth, and differs from Murton, in which they have not made up their mind whether it would be supported or not.

2043. I think you said that the executive had sent out delegates to try to persuade the men not to strike; or to resume work?—To resume work. The men would not listen to it.

2044. After they have done that, what more can they do?—Nothing more. They have done everything they can.

2045. I think you stated very frankly that you do not make any complaints of the executive so far as their bonâ fides is concerned. You agree that they have done all they possibly could to get the decisions of the joint committee enforced?—I believe they always have. They always do their best, and act perfectly straightforwardly.

2046. You are afraid, unless the union manages to get more control over the lodges than they have at the present time, that it may result in the breaking off of negotiations?—In the breaking up of the Miners' Union, and the breaking off of all negotiations with us, unless they can command their own followers.

2047. Would that improve matters?—It would make them much worse for both sides.

2048. Then perhaps it might be better to exercise a little patience and appeal to reason and common sense, and hope that better results will follow?—Yes, we have had to exercise a good deal of that the last year or two.

Mr. *Trow.*

2049. With regard to the powers of the committee, has not your joint committee the power to inflict a fine on men who repudiate its decisions?—No, no power.

2050. Nor on the employers?—On neither side.

2051. Do not you think it is possible for that to be brought about, and for compensation to come from a joint fund?—Do you mean to suggest that a fine should be recovered from an individual man?

2052. I mean what we do ourselves, and have done for the last 22 years. The employers have a perfect right to come to our committee and claim compensation; the men have a perfect right to come to the committee and claim compensation; and the committee has power in any case of dispute, where compensation is claimed, to award compensation and see to the collection of it, and pay it?—Where does the compensation come from?

2053. If it is a large amount (we have only had one) we decide that the workmen should pay one part, and the employers the other?—Which workmen?

2054. The workmen connected with the whole affair?—Suppose the workman says he would not pay it: what then?

2055. He never has yet said he will not pay?—I am afraid the miners very likely would say they would not pay.

2056. If you have to have compensation, it will be out of a joint fund, and then you can only have it if your joint committee have power to inflict it?—Yes, certainly. I think it should come out of the respective funds of the associations. They have each their funds in the bank. Let it come out of that fund.

2057. Your fear is that unless the miners' representatives on the executive increase their influence and power over the men so as to compel them to accept the decision of the joint committee, there must be a failure?—I fear so; but the joint committee decisions are, I believe, nearly invariably carried out. It is very seldom indeed that a joint committee award is not carried out. What I complain of is that the men, instead of going to the joint committee, take the law into their own hands, and strike, or try to enforce concessions from the owners without going to the joint committee.

2058. You gave us a case where the committee dealt with the ramble money, as you called it?—Yes.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

2059. And the men refused to accept the decision of the committee?—That is the case, but I say that those cases are rare. That is the case at the present time.

2060. The consequence in the end must be, if you meet and discuss with the representatives of the men, and the men repudiate the representatives, a crash must come; and you will have to remedy that state of things?—Yes.

2061. And you have done all in your power to assist the executive?—Our great wish is to strengthen the hands of the executive.

2062. You do not blame the executive, but you complain that they have not sufficient influence over the men to induce them to accept?—Exactly.

2063. And you cannot see any way out of the difficulty, except, as Mr. Burt says, forbearance and patience?—That is what we have to do.

Sir *E. Harland.*

2064. Referring to this difficulty, in case a decision went against the men, and they became honourably liable for some of the loss to the employers, is there any other way than so far has been suggested of obtaining solid cash from either the association, or from the members forming the association, to pay up whatever this award might amount to?—Both associations have plenty of money in hand. Take the case of Wingate, a colliery that is on strike in the county now. The miners' executive have ruled that the colliery should go to work and should not be on strike. I think that the expense that the owners of that colliery are put to should be paid out of the funds of the Miners' Association, and if that were done they would very soon go to work.

2065. Would you be in favour of some legally drawn up document by which both parties should become responsible and liable for an agreed sum in case of certain questions arising?—I would have it legally drawn up, certainly; but I am not at all sure that I would be in favour of any legislation on the subject. I think a mutual agreement would be very much better.

2066. Such as is drawn up between two business firms?—Exactly.

2067. And which might be brought into court for adjudication in the usual way?—Yes.

2068. With reference to the earlier portion of your evidence, where you spoke of a sick or accident fund to which a certain portion was contributed per head by the men and by the boys, a certain sum being given as a free gift by the employers, besides gifts of coal, pensions, and other matters, are you aware that there have been two or three Truck Acts in existence, and, I think, an amendment to the Truck Act in about 1889, which, if I mistake not, provided that no contribution should be made to any sick or accident fund unless by the written consent of each workman. And further, that there should be no fines legally stopped on any of the men; now has that affected your sick or accident fund in any way?—No; there is a clause which probably supersedes the Truck Act in the

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1887 which gives us power to deduct these fines. It provides that when more than a specified quantity of material other than the mineral contracted to be gotten is found in any tub sent out of the mine by the hewer, a fine is deducted on a scale agreed upon in proportion to the excess of foreign material. It is according to the Mines Regulation Act that this is done, and it is these fines that we give to the men's fund.

2069. You referred, I think, to a weekly contribution by each man or boy?—Yes.

2070. Can you legally stop that off the wages?—It is done (I believe it is perfectly legal) in all collieries for the Miners' Provident Fund. They need not unless they like. Lots of our men do not belong to this fund. Some of them belong to the Miners' Fund.

2071. Have you some rule stating the amount of fines, &c., and have you to get the written consent of each man and boy before you can subsequently act upon it and levy the fines?—They have their own checkweighmen, and there is a list each day of the tubs that have been laid out.

2072. May I gather that there is some special legislation bearing upon mines which is different to the effect of the Truck Act of 1887 upon other industries of the country?—With regard to fines it is so.

2073. Are you aware that in manufactories generally this Truck Act has had the effect of, in many cases, breaking up the sick and accident funds?—No; I have no knowledge of that.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

2074. I think you said that the putters work 10 hours a day?—Yes, 10 hours a day.

2075. Do you consider that that length of employment is injurious to their health?—Judging from their appearance I should say not. I certainly never noticed it. It is not very hard work. It is nothing like the hard work of a hewer who is working shorter hours.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

2076. With regard to this proposal for a pecuniary penalty to be imposed in case the award was disregarded by either side, if such a penalty were to be legally enforceable, would it not require that the associations should be legally recognised?—I said this would be very much better done by mutual arrangement—a legally drawn up document between the two associations. I do not think we shall ever get that; at least, I fear not.

2077. If it were a document legally drawn up between the two parties, I think you would require to obtain legal recognition as corporations or associated bodies, otherwise such an agreement between them would be null and void?—I believe the Durham Miners' Association is registered now under the Friendly Societies Act.

2078. Is your association?—No.

2079. You would have to have it registered?—Yes, I should think so.

Sir *E. Harland.*

2080. Are you aware that anything more would be necessary than to register the association in order for it to become party to such a legal document?—Of course the great thing would be to get the men's consent to it. That would be the great difficulty. I rather doubt our getting that.

Mr. *Dale.*

2081. Do you attach much importance to such an agreement (that is an agreement whereby the association whose members failed to observe an award should be liable in money compensation) being legally enforceable, or do you think it would simply be acted upon, because its being so acted upon would be the necessary condition of the relationships between the two associations being maintained?—I am quite sure if an arrangement of that kind were entered into by the Miners' Association, whether it was legally binding or not, they would act upon it.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

2082. You think it would be sufficient to have an honourable understanding?—Quite so.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

2083. Respecting the statement that you have made that the relationships between the members of the union and the executive seem more strained now than formerly, that at any rate they do not comply with executive instructions as well as they did in previous years (which is contrary to the general experience of Trade Unions, because the better they become organised the greater the discipline) I was wondering whether you have granted a sufficient allowance for the fact that during the last three or four years, which covers the period during which you say there has been less discipline, there has been a desire all round for improved conditions?—I should think the men would get the improved conditions better by having trust in their own leaders, which is the great principle of unionism.

2084. I was wondering whether it was traceable to the executive having decided perhaps in favour of the men not making demands which other men were getting in the way of increased wages, reduced hours, &c., and that the men themselves felt should be made?—No, I think not. The disputes have been entirely local disputes; not disputes on large matters of principle.

2085. Would it look more like "cussedness" on the part of the men?—I should not like to say that.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till Wednesday, 5th August 1891, at 11.30.

FIFTH DAY.

Commission Room, Westminster Hall, Wednesday, 5th August 1891.

PRESENT:

Mr. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

Sir E. HARLAND, Bart., M.P.
Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.
Mr. E. TROW.

The Right Hon. Sir JOHN E. GORST, Q.C., M.P., Mr. JAMES MAWDSLEY, Mr. GEORGE LIVESEY, Mr. M. AUSTIN (Group C.), and Mr. TOM MANN (Group B.) also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Joint Secretaries.

Mr. RALPH YOUNG and Mr. JOHN NIXON called and examined.

Chairman.

2086. (*To* Mr. *Young.*) You are the corresponding secretary of the Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Association, I believe?—I am.

2087. What branch of industry does your Society represent?—The coal mining industry of Northumberland.

2088. Does it include practically the whole of the mining community of Northumberland?—It does.

2089. What number of workpeople are there engaged in your industry in your district?—In the whole of Northumberland there are 30,041.

2090. Can you divide those into members of your Union and those who are not so?—Yes, we have 16,858 full members and 1,468 half-members, and there are 10,315 not members of any Trade Union. The difference between those numbers represents members of the Enginemen's Association, the Mechanics' Association, and the Deputies' Association.

2091. Are the 16,858 and the 1,468 either members of your union, or of the Mechanics' or Enginemen's Association?

(Mr. *Nixon.*) Those figures represent members of our union. The mechanics, the enginemen, and the deputies have separate associations apart from ours.

2092. It is not of much consequence, but are those who are not members of your Union, but are members of some other association like the Mechanics' or the Deputies', part of the 10,315?

(Mr. *Young.*) No.

2093. In fact, the members of the Mechanics' or of the Deputies' Association are in addition to the figures you have given?—Yes.

2094. Your Association has been good enough to respond to the application made by this Commission to give us in writing answers to certain questions. I do not propose to ask you to repeat the answers in all those cases, because we have them recorded here, and some of them are of the nature of tables, which it would be a little difficult to follow. Perhaps I might, having the advantage of your proof before me, inform the other members of the Commission, that under the head of "Wages, hours, and conditions of labour," sub-head 1, "Wages. (*a.*) Their amounts and fluctuations," there is a "statement showing wages earned per day, "days worked, and amount earned per year, "less about 10 per cent. through time lost "through sickness, accident, and other causes, "by hewers in steam and soft coal collieries, "and the average nett realised price of coal at "the pit from 1878 to the present time"?—Yes, I have put in such a table.

Chairman—continued.

2095. I see that the wage per year, less about 10 per cent., is given as follows: for the year 1879, the average wage of the hewer in Northumberland, less about 10 per cent. for time lost through sickness, accident, and other causes was 55*l.*—I omit the shillings and pence—for 1880, 60*l.*, for 1881, 60*l.*, for 1882, 64*l.*, for 1883, 68*l.*, for 1884, 63*l.*, for 1885, 57*l.*, for 1886, 54*l.*, the wage for 1887 is not given?—No, we had a strike of 17 weeks' duration during that year.

2096. In 1888 it was 55*l.*, in 1889, 73*l.*, and in 1890, 90*l.*?—Yes.

2097. You further state that "hewers, putters, "and generally onsetters, and in some cases "stonemen, are paid by the piece. All other "classes are paid a daily or weekly wage." I see there is no payment through sub-contractors, and as regards deductions by fines or other forms of stoppage, you say: "By agreement "between employers and workmen fines are "inflicted, when more than a specified quantity "of stone or other unsaleable substance is sent "away among coal. Fines are also occasionally "inflicted when men, instead of nicking or

Chairman—continued.

" meeting the miners' committee, of learning " from the coal-owners the lowest settlement the " coal-owners will be likely to accept, and I have " good reason to believe it to be as follows:— " A reduction of 10 per cent. in the steam coal " district, and of 5 per cent. in the soft coal, " with a sliding scale, the steps to be adjusted " by a joint committee. Allowances for rent to " be made by the three collieries concerned, at a " rate to be fixed by arrangement." We knew perfectly well that these were the proposals.

2109. About how many men were affected by that strike, dividing them, if you can, into unionists and those who are not members of a union?—11,719 unionists were affected, and about 2,500 non-unionists.

2110. Is it to be inferred from those figures that it was not a strike throughout all the collieries in Northumberland?—No, there are several collieries in Northumberland that are not connected with the Coal Trade Association, and those collieries continued to work.

2111. Although many of the men employed at those collieries were members of your Association?—Yes.

2112. What was the cost of that strike? Will you kindly give us the official answer you have made to that question?—Yes, we paid to the men on strike 39,000*l.*, and the loss in wages amounted to about 180,000*l.*

2113. Does any system exist in your trade in your district providing for conciliation, arbitration, sliding scales, or other means of preventing or arranging trade disputes?—Not for the adjustment of general wage questions, but we have in existence a joint committee which has been in operation since 1872.

2114. Do you propose to describe the constitution of that joint committee?—Yes; the joint committee consists of six representatives of the workmen and six representatives of the coal-owners, and there is an independent chairman. The joint committee considers all questions of a local character that are submitted to it, and in case the members of the respective associations are unable to come to an agreement the chairman gives his casting vote. The principle I may say for the settlement of the wage questions that come before the joint committee is that there is a recognised standard average for all classes of workmen. In the case of hewers, if the workmen happen to be getting 5 per cent. less wages than the standard average, they can appeal to the joint committee for an advance of wages. If it is clearly proven that they are 5 per cent. below the county average, then, of course, an advance of wages is conceded. If, on the other hand, the wages of the workmen happen to be 5 per cent. above the standard average the owners can appeal to the joint committee for a reduction of wages, and, of course, if they prove their case a reduction is conceded. In the case of other classes of workmen who have fixed averages, if it is shown before that joint committee that they are not getting the average wage—that is, the county average for that class of labour—then the joint committee concedes them the average.

Chairman—continued.

2115. Will you kindly read that portion of the Society's official answer under the head "Joint Committee," which states when it was formed, &c.?—There is a "joint committee " consisting of six representatives of the em- " ployers and six representatives of the work- " men, and an independent chairman." This committee was formed in 1872, and has continued to act down to the present, and with such success that work has not been suspended for a single day at a single colliery by the workmen attempting to resist the decision of the committee on any question submitted to it.

2116. Was that committee maintained during the period of the strike in 1887?—It was in a state of suspended animation, you might say; it did not cease to exist, but it did not act.

2117. Now will you kindly read the official answer to the question "Does any system exist " in your trade in your district providing for " conciliation, arbitration, sliding scales, or " other means of preventing or arranging trade " disputes"?—" From the beginning of 1875 " to the end of 1877 wage questions were " settled by arbitration, of which in that brief " period there were five. At the end of 1877 " a general reduction of 12½ per cent. was de- " manded, and, the owners refusing to submit " their demand to arbitration, a strike of eight " weeks took place. A sliding scale for the " regulation of wages was established in No- " vember 1879, which, with the exception of " being terminated to make certain slight modi- " fications in it, was in operation down to the " end of 1876; it was then terminated by the " employers and a general reduction demanded; " the men resisted, and a strike of 17 weeks " ensued. The loss in wages sustained by the " workmen through this strike was not less " than 180,000*l.* and 2½ per cent. more reduction " than they could have resumed work on at the " end of the second week of the strike. The " principles of the three sliding scales were: " the scale formed in November 1879, provided " that when the average selling price of all " coals sent to bank fell 4*d.* per ton below " 5*s.* 1·28*d.*, the basis price agreed upon, the " wages of hewers and other underground " workmen should be reduced 2½ per cent. and " aboveground men 2 per cent., and when price " increased 4*d.* per ton wages were to be ad- " vanced 2½ and 2 per cent. There was also " provision for an extra 2½ per cent. advance " to be given for every completed 1*s.* 4*d.* per " ton increase in price. The above scale was " altered as follows in May 1883:—The basis " price was reduced from 5*s.* 1·28*d.* to 4*s.* 8*d.* " and in place of 2½ and 2 per cent. advance " or reduction for every 4*d.* rise or fall in price " wages were to be advanced or reduced 1½ per " cent. and 1 per cent. for every rise or fall " of 2*d.* in price, with the same proportionate " additional advances as in the previous scale."

2118. Then the three scales of which your answer makes mention bridged over the period

Chairman—continued.

from the commencement of the first one in November 1879 to the termination of the last one at the end of 1886?—Yes.

2119. And since the end of 1886 has there been any scale?—The official reply goes on, "At the end of the general strike in May 1887 "the scale was re-established, but was altered "so as to give an advance or reduction of "1¼ per cent. and 1 per cent. for every 1*d.* "rise or fall in price under 5*s.* 5*d.*, and 1¼ per "cent. and 1 per cent. for every 2*d.* rise or fall "in price above 5*s.* 5*d.* This scale was termi-"nated by the workmen in December last,"—that should be "at the end of 1887,"—"and "there is consequently no arrangement now "existing for the regulation of the general "rate of wages."

2120. Then that scale was only in existence about seven months?—Yes, that scale was formed at the conclusion of the strike.

2121. Then there has been no scale in existence since the end of 1887?—None since the end of 1887.

2122. How have wages been arranged since the end of 1887?—By conference between the representatives of the workmen and the general body of coal-owners.

2123. And they have got themselves adjusted without either arbitration or suspension of work?—Yes.

2124. In reply to our question asking you to describe the nature and extent of your Union's action in finding work for unemployed members, you say, "We do nothing in the way "of finding work, except in assisting them to "remove to it when they find it by paying "them 5*s.* for the first mile, and 1*s.* for every "additional mile up to 36 miles"?—Yes, that is all we do, we simply allow shifting money—shifting allowance.

2125. Our next question is, "Has your Union "taken or considered any action in the direction "of itself undertaking work"?—Nothing, except that in 1874 we initiated a movement for the purchase of a colliery. After considerable difficulty we succeeded in getting one in Derbyshire. We invested 1,000*l.* in it and our members individually subscribed about 3,000*l.* more. The colliery was worked about 2½ years at a great loss, and was then taken back by the vendor.

2126. May we take it that having been purchased in 1874, when the coal famine was still existing, it was purchased on very high terms?—Yes, it was. The purchase price was 68,000*l.*, and there was, I think, about 23,000*l.* of that paid. There was lost about 20,000*l.* more when the colliery was taken back by the vendor. I think we lost, if I recollect aright, something like 4*s.* 3*d.* per ton upon every ton of coal that was sold for the first 12 months, and we lost during the last 15 months that we had the colliery about 2*s.* 9*d.* for every ton of coal sold. The output was very small.

2127. What was the total money loss actually incurred and borne by you and your associates?—I should think about 4,000*l.* in Northumberland, and about 16,000*l.* or 17,000*l.* in the county of Durham; the Durham miners invested 15,000*l.* in it.

2128. They were partners in the adventure?—Yes.

2129. Were the miners of any other district associated with the enterprise?—No, from no other district did the miners take part in it.

2130. Can you suggest any means of avoiding or arranging strikes and promoting cordial relations between capital and labour?—The best method in my opinion is a sliding scale. There is no other system I think nearly so satisfactory as a sliding scale. It works with much less friction, and the changes come in a much more graduated form than under any other method or system. I think if a scale is formed on a fair basis, it is the most satisfactory method that can be adopted.

2131. Why did the workmen terminate the scale at the end of 1887?—I should think they terminated the scale of 1887 on account of the irritation which was still existing, because they had to submit to the 12½ per cent. reduction. The colliery owners having terminated the scale in 1886, and succeeded in getting that large reduction, which the workmen, of course, did not take kindly to, and trade getting somewhat better, there being a larger demand for coal by the end of 1887, the workmen took the first opportunity of putting an end to the scale which was practically forced upon them at the conclusion of the strike. If we had not agreed to that scale at the end of the strike, the reduction would have been 2½ per cent. more—15 per cent. instead of 12½ per cent. I think it was simply because of the irritation, as I have already stated that the men felt in having to submit to that reduction that they ended the scale at the end of 1887.

2132. Was the 12½ per cent. reduction that you accepted at the end of the strike in May 1887 incorporated in the new scale?—Yes.

2133. That is to say, was the scale of 1887 12½ per cent. lower in its various stages than the previous scale had been?—Yes.

2134. So that may we say the scale of 1887 was perpetuating as long as it lasted that 12½ per cent. reduction?—No, not as long as it might have lasted; that 12½ per cent. would not have continued if the prices had risen very considerably, because as soon as ever the prices should rise to 5*s.* 5*d.* we would then be in possession of the old rate of wages. It would perpetuate above 5*s.* 5*d.* a reduction of 5 per cent more than the previous scale would have given.

2135. Then it comes to this that the scale of 1887 was less favourable to the workmen than the scale of 1886?—Yes.

2136. To an extent which at certain ranges, that is, at certain prices, amounted to 12½ per cent.?—Yes.

2137. At certain other prices amounted to less than that?—Yes.

2138. And then tapered off, perhaps, so that on certain higher prices of coal the two scales would have yielded the same or about the same?

Chairman—continued.

—No, they never came to that point. There would always have been 5 per cent. difference at the most favourable point for the workmen.

2139. In point of fact then I take it that your answer is that the workmen terminated the scale of 1887 under a feeling that it was placing them in a less favourable position than the scales to which they had been accustomed?—Yes, that was so.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

2140. Was the reduction of 12½ per cent. for soft coal as well?—It was 6¼ on the soft coal.

Mr. *Balfour.*

2141. Out of a total number of 30,041, I think you said 10,315 were not members of any Trade Union?—Yes.

2142. Do the unionists find any difficulty in carrying out the arrangements they make with the owners in consequence of this large number of non-unionists?—Not at all. I may say that there are very few non-union workmen in the district which our Union covers. A considerable proportion of the 10,315 non-members are working at small landsales which we know nothing whatever about, and which are outside the principal coalfield. In addition to that, those that are not connected with our Union, but are working in the district which our Union covers, are classes of workmen who receive very low wages, and they are not to be found in large numbers at any colliery.

Mr. *Burt.*

2143. Just to clear up this point; is not the 30,041 which you mentioned taken from the Mines Inspectors' Reports?—Yes.

2144. Then, would not that figure include the men and boys employed on the railways connected with the collieries, the branch railways, and such like, about the pits?—I am not sure that it does; it may. I am not clear on that.

2145. For the last year or two it has done so?—Perhaps there has been a change.

Mr. *Balfour.*

2146. I may take it that in the district over which your Association extends, almost all the miners are members of your Union?—Nearly the whole of the miners are, and the great bulk of the other workmen as well.

2147. Do you happen to know whether, in those districts where your Union does not extend, the relations between employers and employed are satisfactory?—We never hear anything about them; there are scores of very small places at which there may be only from five to twenty men engaged, of whose existence we know nothing whatever.

2148. You put in a table of the average wages in the different years, and in the last three years—1888 to 1890—I notice the fluctuations in the wages have been very large?—Yes.

Mr. *Balfour*—continued.

2149. During those same years the sliding scale has not been in operation?—It has not been.

2150. Do you connect those two facts together—the absence of a sliding scale with these great fluctuations of wages?—Not at all. We would have got practically the same advances if the sliding scale, which was terminated at the end of 1886, had been in operation.

2151. Then the rise of wages was really owing to a boom in the coal trade?—Yes.

2152. And a great rise in prices?—Yes; the prices are also shown in the table we have sent up.

2153. Do you consider that the wages which you get at present are about as much as the owners can reasonably afford to pay?—I think they could afford to pay more. I have no doubt about that. I should think they will have a margin of profit of perhaps 1*s.* or 1*s.* 3*d.* per ton. Of course, if we could get the whole of it, we should have higher wages.

2154. You would not expect, however, to take in the form of wages the whole of the profit?—Oh, dear, no!

2155. Do you mean, leaving the owners a reasonable profit, you still think that wages are not as high as they might be?—It depends upon what a reasonable profit is. I suppose that at a time like this, when prices are high, they will require something more than an average profit in order to compensate them for the times when prices are low.

2156. When prices are low they sometimes run their collieries without making any profit at all?—Yes, I have no doubt whatever about that.

2157. And sometimes they run them even at a loss?—Yes.

2158. With regard to the hours of work—onsetters, I think you said, work from 10 to 11 hours, and boys 10 hours?—Yes.

2159. Do you see any practicable way of reducing the hours of labour of the boys?—I do not see any practical way of reducing the hours of the boys, except at a considerable disadvantage to the whole of the workmen, and also to the boys themselves, if you take their whole career as workers.

2160. Would you explain that last statement, please?—Yes, by reducing the hours of the boys, say two hours per day, and bringing their hours down to eight hours per day, that would be a reduction of two hours per day for a matter of three or five years; but, then, what would follow? There would be a considerable increase in the cost of production. Wages would consequently at once be much less than they are, and, in addition, the boys would have to work for a period of perhaps 20 years, from half-an-hour to an hour-and-a-half per day longer, so that I think, it would be a great disadvantage to the whole of the workmen, including the boys, during the whole of their lives.

2161. When you say that they would, for 20 years or more, have to work longer hours, do

Mr. *Balfour*—continued.

you mean on the supposition that the men would work one longer shift, and that the boys would work two shifts of eight hours?—It would not be possible, in my opinion, to get two shifts of boys. There is a considerable difficulty at present in getting a sufficient number of boys to work the mines under the present system, and if there were three shifts of workmen and two shifts of boys, that difficulty would be increased by 50 per cent.

2162. When I said one shift of men, I should have said two shifts of men working longer hours, and two shifts of boys eight hours?—That is altogether impossible.

2163. Altogether impossible?—Yes; if you take a more favourable view of that, and say three shifts of men working night and day, and two shifts of boys, it would not be practicable in my opinion to get a sufficient number of boys to work under that system.

2164. There is necessarily a relation between the hours during which the boys work and the hours during which the hewers work, and you see, I understand you to say, no way of arranging the hours of the hewers and the hours of the boys, so as to give the boys shorter hours, consistently with the general interest of all who are employed in the mines, whether men or boys?—No, I do not see any way. I may say that we had that question under consideration at the beginning of last year. Some of our members thought that it might be possible to arrange some plan by which the hours of the boys might be shortened to eight or nine per day. What is termed the wage committee, consisting of 10 representatives of the workmen were appointed to meet and consider the subject, and report to the rest of the members. They met, and were fully convinced, after considering the question in all its aspects, that it was altogether impracticable. They reported to the district, a delegate meeting was called for the purpose of considering that report; the whole subject was discussed at the delegate meeting, a whole day was devoted to it, and delegates were then to report to their lodges the result of the discussion, and to send their votes in after reporting to their lodges. The result of that vote was, after the subject had been fully discussed and placed before the lodges, that only one colliery out of about 56 voted in favour of eight hours. I might read here the report of the committee upon that subject. "Having been instructed "to endeavour to arrange some plan for "shortening the hours of the boys without "lengthening those of the hewers, we very "fully discussed the subject. As regards the "hours of the hewers we are second to no "district in the country, and superior to "every other except Durham. The hours of "the boys, however, are not at all satisfactory. "Both the advantages that we enjoy, and the "disadvantages under which we labour, are due "to the double shift system. The more we "discuss the question, the more apparent it is "to us that it will be exceedingly difficult to "retain the benefits of that system for the "hewers, if we materially shorten the hours of "drawing coal. The first proposal we con-"sidered was that of a uniform eight hours "single shift for all clasess of workmen, in-"cluding boys. That has met with approval "at many conferences of miners, and resolutions "in its support have been carried at such "conferences by overwhelming majorities. A "very brief discussion convinced us that this is "utterly impracticable for this county; it would "almost necessarily mean an extension of the "hours of the hewers; it would certainly mean "the discharge of some thousands of workmen. "Whatever solution may be forthcoming, we "are agreed that the time during which coals "are drawn cannot be diminished to any great "extent. Another plan discussed was that of "two shifts of boys of eight hours each with "three shifts of hewers. This we think would "probably be more easily obtained than most "other changes that have been suggested; it "would have the advantage of giving moderate "hours to the boys. Two great drawbacks "are that it would be very difficult to obtain a "sufficient number of boys, and it would "necessarily involve a certain amount of night "working. Another suggestion was that the "pits draw coals 10 hours, and that the boys "have nine hour shifts, a portion of them going "down as at present, and another portion an "hour later. Something similar to this is now "in operation at some of the collieries where "11 hours are worked." That went out to our lodges, who sent their delegates to discuss this report. The discussion took place, as I have stated; they returned to their lodges, and the vote of the lodges was taken, and only one out of 56 was in favour of eight hours.

2165. That report which you have just read says that under a uniform eight hours system there would probably ensue the necessity of increased hours for the hewers, and there certainly would ensue the dismissal of a large number of men: would you explain that statement a little further, please?—Yes, it requires the whole of the time that is now devoted to drawing coals to get the work away produced by the men at present employed, so that if there was taken off from 20 to 30 per cent. of the time available for getting the coals out of the pit, it would consequently follow that about 30 per cent. of the men employed would have to be discharged. It would be impossible to get the work out that they produced.

Mr. *Burt.*

2166. In addition to that, may I ask whether it would be possible for the whole of the men now employed in two shifts to find pit room so as to perform their work effectively?—Not with the number of drawing hours, that is, with eight hours drawing.

2167. The men are now in two shifts for the most part?—Yes.

2168. If they all go in together, would there be accommodation in the pits for the total

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

number of men?—No, certainly not; not without they were working in a manner that would be a very great disadvantage compared with the present system. There is a large quantity of the coal in Northumberland worked on what is known as the long wall system—two men generally work together—and if the men all had to go in together, there would be four working where there are now only two, and they would be to a very large extent in each other's way.

Mr. *Balfour.*

2169. I understand perfectly well how a uniform eight hours' system might seriously reduce the number of miners employed, but I do not quite see how it would at the same time lengthen the hours of work?—The hewers work now less than eight hours, and, of course, if there was a single eight hours' shift, they would be expected to work eight hours, if that is the point you are raising, I am not sure. In respect to the eight hours, I do not know whether I might say further, speaking for myself, that my objection is not simply on account of the difficulty that would accrue to the workmen in Northumberland, but it is because I think it is economically unsound, and that those districts who now work longest, and expect to derive most benefit from the change would suffer most by its operation. If workmen, say, in Wales, and in the Midlands, are now required to send away 10 or 11 hours' produce in order to maintain their present position against other districts that are more favourably situated, they would certainly be placed at a disadvantage compared with the position they at present occupy, if they were prevented by Act of Parliament, or by any other means or methods, from working so long a time. If they were reduced from 10 or 11 hours, say, in a normal state of trade (in a time of prosperity like the present, when there is a margin of profit to work the worst of collieries, they, of course, can work shorter hours), but in a normal state of trade in which they are required to work 10 or 11 hours to compete with other districts which are more favourably circumstanced, if they were compelled to work only eight hours many of the collieries would, in my opinion, have to be closed. It would be practically impossible for them to do it.

2170. You say that the days during which work has gone on have varied from 215 in 1886, which was a year of depression, to 276, I think it was, in 1879?—Yes.

2171. Do the owners determine the number of days that are to be worked in each week?—Yes, they do; but there is another power that determines them, that is, whether they can find the customers to take their produce at a price which they consider will pay them for selling it.

2172. You do not think that the miners have any reason to complain of the action of the owners in reducing the number of days; the owners do not do that unless it is absolutely necessary?—Not unless it is necessary, I should think. There is no reason why they should

Mr. *Balfour*—continued.

work their pits a less number of days than they can do with advantage.

2173. With regard to the strike, which took place in the beginning of 1887, I believe?—Yes, in January, 1887.

2174. With regard to that strike, which lasted 17 weeks, I understood you to say, that at the end of two weeks, a more favourable offer was made by the owners than that which the men were eventually compelled to accept?—Yes, it was practically an offer; we understood that it would be accepted by the owners.

2175. I do not know whether it is a delicate question to ask, but what was the attitude of the executive of the Association with regard to that offer?—They were very strongly in favour of its acceptance.

2176. And did they advise the men to that effect?—Yes.

2177. Did the men reject the offer against the advice of their executive?—Yes.

2178. It has not often happened, I suppose, that the Union, as a whole, has rejected the advice offered to it upon a point of that kind by its executive?—No, we have nothing to complain of in our district in that respect. They have, on a few occasions, not seen their way to accept suggestions that have been made, but I should think, in nine cases out of ten, they have accepted the advice which has been tendered when the facts have been placed before them. I may say further, that during that strike, what was termed the Wage Committee, who met the owners from time to time in conference, were very strongly of opinion as to the desirability of closing the strike as speedily as possible. In fact, before the strike commenced, the Wage Committee were prepared to accept a 10 per cent. reduction. They made that offer to the owners; the owners unfortunately refused it, and the gear was brought to bank, and the strike commenced. Then, as I have already stated, when the strike had been on about a fortnight, through Mr. Morley's intervention, the owners were willing to accept a 10 per cent. reduction, and also to concede rent which was not a condition attached to the offer which the Wage Committee made to the owners. However, that was declined by the owners in the first place, that is, the 10 per cent. offer by the Wage Committee; and when the owners were prepared to accept the 10 per cent. and to give rent along with that, the men refused to accept it. There was, of course, as you may naturally expect, a great deal of irritation in the county, and very large numbers of the workmen thought that the Wage Committee had gone too far and were not fighting with sufficient vigour, I suppose. They did not approve entirely of the action of the committee, and many of the leaders of those that were opposed to the Wage Committee addressed meetings, and expressed their disapproval of their action, and the Wage Committee felt it necessary, under these circumstances, not being supported by the members of the Union, to resign their position on two occasions. They

Mr. *Balfour*—continued.

were all re-elected on the first occasion; the second time, two or three of them were not re-elected, and others, leaders of those that were opposed to the Wage Committee, were put in their position. When, however, we met the owners again, and those who had previously been opposed to the position taken up by the Wage Committee had an opportunity of having the facts placed before them the same as the old Wage Committee had had, they, of course, saw things exactly as the old Wage Committee saw them, and were prepared to make the best of it.

2179. I gather from that answer that the final result of the whole transaction must have been a great increase of confidence in the wisdom of the executive in these matters?—Yes.

2180. Since they in the end proved right, and the members of the Union generally proved wrong?—Yes.

2181. In order to establish and maintain harmonious relations with the employers, I suppose you would say it is above all things of importance that the executive should have a strong hold over the members of the Union?—Yes, I think it is; and I also think that it is desirable that the owners (and we have nothing whatever to complain of in this respect) should give as much information about the condition of trade as possible, and should take the opportunity of conferring with their own workmen at their own collieries, and placing them in possession of whatever information may be of use to them. I think that one of the mistakes made during that strike was that the owners did not go out to the workmen and place the facts before them; that they did not meet the workmen of their own collieries as they might have done, and shown, as no doubt they could have shown, the deplorable position we had every reason to believe they were in. I believe, if committees of the various lodges of our Union had been called together by the managing partners and owners, and put in possession of such information as they no doubt could have placed before them, we might have had that strike averted.

2182. There is a general disposition in the Northumberland coal trade, both on the part of the employers and the employees, to be as fair as possible, and no desire on either side to gain more than what might be regarded as a legitimate advantage?—I think not. We, of course, do not intend or desire to get more than we think we have a right to, and considering the manner in which the coal-owners generally comport themselves towards us when we meet them, we think that they look at matters in pretty much the same light.

2183. On the whole you would say that the relations between the miners and the owners were very friendly?—Very friendly indeed.

2184. You do not find your Joint Committee overburdened with work?—No. We meet once in two months, and I should think that the average number of cases which have come before our Joint Committee will be from 10 to 14 every two months. But there have been, no doubt, a very large number of cases settled locally latterly without coming before the Joint Committee, on account of the workmen understanding the principle on which the Joint Committee adjust wages. Of course, they find that if they can do just what the Joint Committee would do if any grievance or wage question were submitted to it, that it is quite proper, if not better, to settle it at home, and a very large number of cases are settled locally in that way, without appealing to the Joint Committee. In most cases, however, after they have made these local settlements, they appeal to the Joint Committee to have them confirmed.

2185. You have no regulations for determining what questions may and what questions may not come before the Joint Committee?—All wage questions and matters relating to methods of work, &c., come before the Joint Committee.

2186. Is there any class of question which is excluded from the cognizance of the Joint Committee?—General questions.

2187. But apart from general questions?—I believe there has been some doubt as to whether the Joint Committee has any power to deal with one question, and that is rent allowances.

2188. The workmen have invariably submitted, I think you have said, to the decisions of the Joint Committee?—Yes. As I have said, we have not had a single stoppage for a single day since the commencement of our Union, by the men protesting or striking against any question that was submitted to the Joint Committee. On one occasion at Broomhill Colliery, I think, a reference took place upon certain matters that were submitted to the Joint Committee, and the Joint Committee appointed referees to go out and visit the colliery and settle the grievance or matters in dispute. It happened, however, on that occasion, that the referees dealt with a question which was not submitted to them, and the men, not being satisfied with the settlement, protested that they had no right to interfere with that question, seeing that it was never brought before them, and there was a stoppage of about three days, I believe, when that was withdrawn and the men worked on with the settlement made by the referees on matters that were submitted to them. But we have not, as I have said, had a stoppage for a single day upon any question that was submitted to them.

2189. Do you consider a sliding scale a method of settling wages preferable to settlement by negotiation?—Yes. If you can settle questions always by negotiation it would be quite as satisfactory, I daresay, as a sliding scale, because that would indicate that both parties were satisfied that it was better to settle than to strike, but in a time of depression, especially when prices are receding, I think it is almost impossible to settle wage questions without a conflict of some sort.

2190. Have any efforts been made since 1887 to re-establish the sliding scale?—No, there

Mr. *Balfour*—continued.

have not. We have once or twice had the subject brought before our Council or delegate meeting, and we have never got a majority to support the establishment of a sliding scale until now. We submitted a proposition to our members a short time ago, and they have supported it. There were about 138 or 140 votes given in favour of it, and about 68 or 69 against it. Each vote represents 50. This is what we placed before them, and what they have supported, "Settlement. Though we have "managed to settle our general wage questions "without much friction during the last two "or three years, we cannot regard the present "method as wholly satisfactory. Practically, "wages have been governed in the main by "the rise and fall of prices. That was so long "before any sliding scale was established, and "it must always be the case, sliding scale or "no sliding scale. You decided some time ago "to abolish the sliding scale, and we have no "intention here of re-arguing the question. "We may mention, however, that the district "that has received the highest advance in the "country is South Wales, the only district in "which a sliding scale is now in operation, and "in which wages are and for many years past "have been regulated by a scale. This proves "that a sliding scale does not in itself keep "down wages. As we have said, however, we "fully recognise your opposition to a scale, but "we think that unless some better method of "adjusting wages is adopted, we shall be "involved in great difficulties in the future. "After much discussion and a great deal of "thought bestowed upon the subject, we submit "the following points for your consideration:— "The appointment of accountants to represent "us as during the time of the sliding scale. "This is a matter of satisfaction to ourselves, "since at present we are dependent entirely "upon the owner's accountant, though we have "no reason to doubt the accuracy of the figures "as now obtained. After the accountants have "ascertained the prices, the Wage Committee, "and an equal number of representatives of the "coal-owners, with an independent chairman, "say so-and-so, or some other experienced "arbitrator, to meet, and with full information "before them to determine what should be the "rate of wages for the succeeding three months "or other period previously agreed upon "between employers and workmen. We shall "be glad if our lodges will discuss this pro-"posal, and say by letter to the office whether "or not they approve of it." The result, as I have already stated, was that about 138 to 140 have supported that, and 68, I believe, have opposed it.

2191. Then you think there is some chance of a sliding scale being re-established in the comparatively near future?—Yes.

2192. What you have referred to would be the first step towards the re-establishment of a sliding scale?—Yes; I am inclined to think that is so. I think a sliding scale could be established that would be of a more durable character than any almost which has existed. By the experience that we have obtained under the sliding scale and since its termination, I think there would not be much difficulty in agreeing upon a basis that would be satisfactory, and also, as I stated here, providing for any unforeseen factor that might arise upon the principle of the scale being settled. My notion is that the old sliding scale failed, in this respect, that as soon as ever the price fell to about the cost of production, then when prices got below that the relief that was given from wages was not sufficient. I believe that it is necessary in order that they may be more permanent or more durable than they have been in the past, that provision should be made for more relief than was given under the old scales. I believe also that there should be something like a neutral zone during which the principle of the old scale should operate. Above that we should have a greater proportionate advance than the old scale provided. I would also suggest, for any scale that might be established to be of a workable character, and to prevent, as I have said, any unforeseen factor coming in to terminate it, that an umpire should be appointed who might be called upon to act when either party wished to have the scale revised. It strikes me that if a scale based on these principles were established for a matter of two or three years certain, and an umpire elected, either for that time (or there might be a clause in the arrangement that an umpire could be chosen, provided either side wished to have the scale revised) it would work well. I think, however, that it would almost be as well, although I cannot say that I lean strongly towards either view, to select a person at the time the sliding scale is formed who should act during the period of two or three years for which the scale might have been agreed upon.

2193. You do not think that in your district the men would object to placing so much power in the hands of a single individual?—I do not see what reason they would have for doing so. They have agreed to do so according to the voting on these suggestions that I have just read to you. I do not see why they should and I hardly think they would, because we from time to time, have favoured arbitration. We have had several arbitrations, and that is placing quite as much power, in fact, greater power, in the hands of the arbitrator than would be the case when an umpire acts in connexion with a scale, the principle of which has been agreed to by the workmen and the owners.

2194. You have not found in your district any reluctance to accept the decisions of the arbitrator or to submit questions to an arbitrator?—We have never had any difficulty in respect to any award that has been given by an arbitrator. We have had four wage arbitrations, and one in relation to the mode of working, and there has not been a single hour lost that I am aware of by our men protesting or wishing to set aside any decision of an arbitrator.

Mr. *Balfour*—continued.

2195. You gave us some details with regard to an attempt to work a colliery by co-operation?—Yes.

2196. That was not a successful attempt?—It was not successful, as I stated.

2197. Do you attribute that non-success to any general causes that would operate again if the same experiment were tried again?—Not necessarily. I think it was a very bad speculation. It was a colliery which I do not think could possibly pay in a normal state of trade.

2198. You think the men were ill-advised at the outset of that experiment, and that it was not given a fair trial?—I think the colliery was given a fair trial, but I do not think that colliery would have been a good speculation if worked by anyone.

2199. Do you think the system was given a fair trial?—No. I do not think the system had had a fair trial at all. I do not see why a colliery that is situated and circumstanced like any ordinary colliery should not pay if worked on the principle of co-operation just as well as by private enterprise.

2200. Neither your Association, however, nor any other association has since then tried to work a colliery on its own account?—The Yorkshiremen, I believe, made a similar attempt about the same time, a little later than ours, but that also failed. But nearly everybody who took collieries at that time, 1873, 1874, 1875, failed. Nearly every colliery which was opened up in our county was closed up directly after prices commenced to fall.

2201. Would you like to see that experiment tried again?—Yes; I am a co-operator, and I think that ultimately co-operation will succeed.

2202. You see no inherent defects in the co-operation system as applied to collieries?—I must confess that I have some doubt as to whether a colliery worked by co-operators would be likely to be as successful as a colliery worked by private enterprise. As a rule, those who come to the top and have sufficient money to buy a colliery are quick, cute, sharp-brained fellows, and I think, therefore, that the probabilities are in favour of such men being more successful than you would find to be the case with a miscellaneous lot of men.

2203. In fact the employer is where he is now because he is of use?—Oh, yes, certainly.

2204. To eliminate him would mean probably that the enterprise would be worked under less favourable circumstances economically?—That is my opinion; yes.

2205. Has any attempt at profit sharing been made in your district?—No, we have never had that system tried in Northumberland.

Mr. *Burt.*

2206. The co-operative colliery was begun at a bad time?—Oh, a very bad time.

2207. At the worst time?—Yes, at the worst time; just when prices were beginning to recede.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

2208. The workmen were, I presume, advised by a competent mining engineer before purchasing the colliery?—Yes, they were; but notwithstanding that, they had very great difficulty in getting a colliery. As soon as ever it became known that we were co-operators that were seeking the colliery, many of those that had collieries to sell declined to let us have them, and I suppose we were, under the circumstances driven to accept a colliery less favourably conditioned than we might have got if we had not been co-operators and working men.

2209. There was nothing, I suppose, in the conduct of the members who invested their savings, in many cases the savings of a lifetime, in that affair, to render it a hopeless enterprise?—Nothing whatever. Of course the management of the colliery was in the hands of a directorate, and they appointed the manager and his subordinates, and it was worked pretty much, I daresay, on the same principles as other collieries that are worked by private enterprise.

2210. Still, I gather from your answer to Mr. Balfour that you hardly consider mining one of those simple things which are most easily worked on co-operative principles?—No; I think it an exceedingly difficult thing to work a colliery successfully.

2211. With regard to the strikes of 1877 and 1887, are those the only general strikes that have taken place in Northumberland since the Union was established?—Yes; the only general strikes since 1863.

2212. In 1877 was arbitration offered by the workmen and refused by the coal owners?—Yes, it was.

2213. And in 1887 was arbitration offered by either the one side or the other?—No. We knew, I may say, that the owners would not accept arbitration. They had made up their minds to have a reduction. They stated that they could not see their way to go to arbitration. This was not put to us at a formal interview; but, finding that it was necessary to have relief they could not risk their case in the hands of an arbitrator, and were obliged, therefore, they contended, to have this reduction by hook or by crook. We had had an arbitration in 1877. Lord Herschell acted as umpire on that occasion, and the demands of the owners were, I believe, for 15 per cent. reduction. Their demands, however, were dismissed, and they very shortly after that gave us notice and terminated our engagements, to enforce a reduction of 12½ per cent. That was when the strike of eight weeks' duration took place. We went in at 12½ per cent. at the end of that time.

2214. The Joint Committee was formed in 1872, and you mentioned that in many cases questions of dispute or differences are settled locally?—Yes.

2215. And this, to a considerable extent, relieves the Joint Committee of business that would otherwise come to it?—Yes; just so.

2216. And you would say that wherever a question can be settled in that way, it is preferable to having it brought before the Joint

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

Committee?—I think it is; because it is indicative of the fact that the men are satisfied to agree to that settlement rather than risk it with the Joint Committee.

2217. Are there other cases in which the workmen apply to the manager and he declines to settle locally, and says it is a subject to be dealt with by the Joint Committee?—Oh, yes, that is often done; very often indeed.

2218. Or the number of cases that come before the Joint Committee might be further diminished?—Most certainly.

2219. With regard to the strike of 1887, you mentioned that the Wage Committee very early in the negotiations were prepared, and indeed offered to accept 10 per cent?—Yes.

2220. In that case, I suppose, it would not have been quite a popular settlement, so far as the workmen were concerned?—No, it would not. First of all we offered to submit to a reduction of 5 per cent., and we drew up a scale on another basis in order to afford them that relief. That, however, was not accepted; and we reported to the workmen the result of our negotiations with the owners, and, of course, that was not approved of; the 5 per cent. Soon after that we were sent back to meet the owners, to make the best terms we could, and then submit them to the men, we went to the 10 per cent. There is no doubt, and we all knew that we should have a very stiff job on hand; but we knew that if a reduction was inevitable, it would be better to get the best terms, bad as they were, than to drift into a strike and get worse at the end; and we were prepared to face all that.

2221. The Wage Committee were prepared to face the unpopularity that would have arisen?—Yes; we intended to go to the collieries and address meetings, putting the facts before the workmen, so that they might have an opportunity of seeing the position as well as ourselves.

2222. And you stated your belief that, unpopular as it was, provided the owners had accepted the 10 per cent., the Wage Committee could have carried the workmen with them?—I believe we should have done that.

2223. And a strike would have been averted?—Yes, the strike would have been avoided. I am not aware of a single instance that we have ever dealt with in that manner, and we have had several of rather an unpalatable character, which we have not succeeded in.

2224. When did the Wage Committee make the offer to the coal owners of a 10 per cent. reduction?—The 5 per cent. was made before the notice to cease work was given. Then I believe it was while the 14 days' notices were running that we made an offer to accept 10 per cent. That was on the 8th of January.

2225. It was before the stoppage took place?—No, it was before the notices were given. It was on the 8th January, and the notices would not be given until the 13th of January.

2226. It was before work was suspended?—Yes, it was before notices were given.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

2227. And with regard to that offer of 10 per cent. by the Wage Committee they did not say that they would recommend the men to accept it, but that they were prepared to accept the responsibility of agreeing and then going to the men; is that so?—I think that was so, but I am not exactly clear upon that. Perhaps I shall be able to say by referring to this book. I see here: "As the meeting had been a very "long one, we suggested an adjournment until "the following day." (This is on the 8th of January.) "This was agreed to. When we "met the owners on Saturday we informed "them that we could not accept their offer, "but being exceedingly wishful to effect a set-"tlement, if possible, we would agree to a "10 per cent. reduction, provided that house "rent be paid according to the scale previously "in operation. This also was rejected by the "owners. They stated, however, that they had "made some modification as regards house "rent, and they would agree to pay according "to the scale which had previously existed. "They then handed to us a resolution," which was 12 per cent., then 10 per cent. without rent. We made this offer on the same day, I believe: "We therefore asked them if they would agree "to a 10 per cent. reduction on wages without "any present general agreement with regard "to house rent. This also was refused by the "owners. Our negotiations then terminated." It does not state, and I do not recollect whether we undertook to settle at 10 per cent., but at any rate we were prepared to go out to the lodges and recommend the men to accept it.

2228. Did the Wage Committee divide themselves into sections and go to meetings of the men at the early stage of the strike, just at the very beginning?—Yes, the Wage Committee, as soon as ever the proposal which emanated from the employers through the intervention of Mr. Morley was placed before the workmen—that was a fortnight after the strike commenced—we went out to the collieries and addressed meetings; but the feeling ran very high, and we were not very successful. There was no doubt at all, I think, in the minds of the Wage Committee that had the owners accepted the 10 per cent. we should have succeeded in inducing the men, when the facts were placed before them, to agree to it.

2229. You have expressed your opinion very strongly in favour of a sliding scale; may I ask if you have reason to believe that your opinion is shared by the Wage Committee?—Yes; and I am not aware of a single member of the Wage Committee dissenting from that view, nor am I aware of any member, except one it may be, who has formed part of any of our Wage Committees for many years who did not favour a sliding scale as the best method of regulating wages.

2230. And when you say "the best method," you have in view, I presume, not only the avoiding of friction and controversy, but is it your view that in the long run it would give quite as high a wage if not a higher wage to the workmen?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

2231. Taken over a lengthened period?—Yes. I think we should in all probability get just about the same daily wage that we get without it. But we would get more work in the year than we get without the scale. I think, in fact, that we might get a slightly higher daily wage under a scale than we would get without it, and certainly it would improve the trade of the district, as these figures in respect to the produce from the United Kingdom and the two or three other districts mentioned here show. From 1874 to 1879, that was before the scale came into operation, and when wage difficulties were generally settled by arbitration or conciliation, as it is termed, or conference, the produce for the United Kingdom in 1874 was 126½ million tons. For 1879 the produce was 133·7 millions. That was an increase of 6·71 from 1874 to 1879. The South Wales district showed an increase during that period of 8·7. The East of Scotland, the part of Scotland that comes into competition with us showed an increase of 11·8. Northumberland, during the same time, showed a decrease of 14·35. The produce in 1874 in Northumberland was 6·4 millions, and in 1879 it had fallen to 5½ millions, or a decrease of 14·35 Now that, I am inclined to think, was due to this fact. The increase for the United Kingdom, as these figures show, was 6·71. The increase for South Wales was 8·7. The increase for Scotland was 11·8, and for Northumberland a decrease of 14·35. Now, our Union was relatively much stronger than any other Union in the United Kingdom.

2232. Among miners, you mean?—Among miners; and there was, consequently, very great difficulty in getting wage questions settled any way speedily, and these settlements were constantly preceded by a good deal of agitation and higgling and uncertainty, and consequently the owners of Northumberland were not in so good a position to make contracts as were the owners in other districts in which the Unions were not so strong, with the result that Northumberland shows a decrease of 14·35, while those other districts of the United Kingdom show a considerable increase. Then, as soon as ever the scale was brought into operation, instead of finding a decrease, such as had gone on for these five years, the produce commenced to increase very rapidly. From 1879 down to 1886, there was an increase of 32·7, as against an increase for the United Kingdom in the same time of 17·8, whereas before the sliding scale came into operation we were relatively 20 per cent. worse than the United Kingdom. That was very largely due to the steadiness given to trade by the scale.

2233. Do you think there is anything in the contention that the operation of a sliding scale tends to keep prices down?—I do not see why it should, because nearly three-fourths of any advance in price goes to sources other than wages. Supposing the wages cost of production is 3*s.* 3*d.* a ton, and taking the principle of the scale, we get for every 1*s.* advance in price 8·62. Well, 8·62, with cost of production, assumed to be 3*s.* 3*d.*, only gives 3·36*d.*; all the rest of the shilling goes to sources other than wages. So that there can be no reason why owners should not be as anxious to get as high a price under the scale as under any other method.

2234. Now, with regard to the hours, would you consider the hours of the boys in Northumberland satisfactory?—That depends entirely upon the standard of comparison. If you simply had to deal with it as an ideal matter, then it is not necessary that they should work so many hours; but if you have to deal with it as a practical matter, and you have the difficulties on the one side and on the other set before you, then it is satisfactory. It depends entirely upon the standard you take.

2235. May I take it your answer is, you do not think the hours could be shortened without introducing greater evils?—That is my opinion. I do not see how it could be done, and, as I have already stated, the Wage Committee have had this subject under consideration. They have reported to the lodges, and the lodges, with the exception of 1 in 56, were of the same opinion.

2236. What are the hours of the hewers in Northumberland?—The hours of the hewers at long-hour collieries, I should think, would vary from 7 hours and 20 minutes to 7 hours and 30 minutes.

2237. In the face?—No, from bank to bank.

2238. Do you think that the short hours of the hewers are dependent on the existing system—the double shift system?—Yes, entirely, I think.

2239. Would it be true to say, as it has been said publicly, that the double shift system was introduced by the coal-owners of Northumberland?—No; I do not know what data or warrant anyone has for making that statement. I think it has partly been brought about by the different method of working. I think that it was brought about, in the first place, by the introduction of blasting. When the coal was worked by wedging, it was then an advantage for both workmen to be in to wedge the coal down; but when blasting became general, it was not an advantage that both workmen should be at the coal face together. It was more advantageous that they should work single. I think that that has, perhaps, had more to do with the short time that is worked than any other thing; and that it was not brought about by the owners compelling the men, as we have heard it said, to work a shorter time than they desired to work.

2240. You mentioned that recently efforts have been made through the Wage Committee to shorten the hours of the boys?—Yes.

2241. And to some extent that has been successful?—Yes.

2242. Has the Union, from time to time, taken steps to shorten the hours of the boys?—Yes. In 1871 or 1872, the year before the Mines Act came into operation, the Union, by negotiation

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

with the coal trade, succeeded in getting the hours of the boys reduced an hour per day, and they have again this year succeeded in reducing the hours of some boys from half-an-hour to an hour per day. That change came into operation on the first of July last.

2243. I suppose that the hours of the hewers might be longer, and have been longer, even under the double shift system?—Yes. About 34 or 35 years ago, the general practice in Northumberland, with very rare exceptions, was, for the fore shift man to go in at one, two, or three o'clock in the morning, and his partner to go in some three or four hours later. They would then continue working together for some hours, and then the last man would come away, after they had been, I should think, each of them, in the pit from 9 to 12 hours.

2244. And have the hours of the workmen been shortened through the combined action of the men mainly?—Well, we have not anything very clear or specific, I am afraid, upon this point, but I think at one or two collieries one could almost say that it was by the action of the Union that the hours were shortened. But I am inclined to think that the introduction of the short-shift system was principally due to the introduction of blasting.

2245. You have referred to the fluctuations in trade in Northumberland owing to the Baltic being closed during a certain time in the year, and to other causes. During times of depression have pits been stopped?—Yes.

2246. In many cases?—Yes.

2247. And great numbers of men have been thrown out of employment?—Yes.

2248. Has the Union done anything to make provision for the men when thrown out of employment in that way?—Oh, yes. I think Mr. Nixon will speak to that. He has got the figures on that point.

Mr. *Trow*.

2249. With regard to the average earnings of the men, does the 90*l*. 8*s*. 6*d*. include the allowance for rent and coal, or is it the nett wages received by the hewers?—You may say it is the nett wages, less, I should think, about 1½*d*. a day. It does not include rent; rent is in addition to that.

2250. They receive the rent and coal, so this 90*l*. 8*s*. 6*d*. is the nett wages?—Yes, except there is powder comes off this and lights, amounting to 1½*d*. per day, perhaps.

2251. So that if you were giving the average wage of the miner as compared with any other district, except Durham, you would have to add the rent on to this 90*l*. 8*s*. 6*d*.?—That would be so.

2252. Since the sliding scale was dispensed with in 1887, are we to understand that in all your arrangements affecting wages, the basis of the sliding scale has been the guide that you have taken?—Not necessarily. We have tried to get as much as we could. Of course, the price has been our chief guide. But still we have not necessarily bound ourselves down to what the sliding scale would have given.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

2253. Do not misunderstand me. I d suggest you have bound yourself down; bu the basis of the scale been the guide tha employers have used to fix the rate of w —Yes, principally that I think. They been principally guided by that.

2254. So that if the sliding scale had actually in existence your wages would been similar, on the whole, to what they been?—Yes, we got 31¼ at the highest and if the scale had been in operation 1886 scale I mean—we should have had 3 cent. under it.

2255. With regard to the reduction i hours of the boys I should like to be clea the Commission to understand that if the of the boys were now reduced, say, by hours for three or five years, the result o concession thus granted would be to inc the hours of the boys for the whole period the termination of the three or five years half-an-hour to one-and-a-half hours per —Yes.

2256. For the whole period they were i pit?—Yes, that would be so.

2257. Then if it were put to the boys t selves, is your opinion, as the boys are p sharp, that they would themselves vote ag securing this small concession now, and s themselves with longer hours during the of the period they would be employed as —I do not know what would be the result were submitted to the boys themselves. I hardly be said that boys always take the v course. They might or they might not agr that.

2258. When Mr. Stobart was here expressed a fear that difficulties would ar Durham owing to the members of the Associ refusing to accept and carry out the agreem made by the executive of the Feder Board?—Yes.

2259. Is there any fear of that kind in district?—Not at all. We have not, as I said, had a single case since the Joint Comm was established in which the men have attempted to set aside any decision that been given by the Joint Committee. We just now, unfortunately, a colliery that has laid idle for one or two days, protesting ag or rather trying to set aside, I am afrai arrangement in respect of the hours tha have made for the boys. But that has t place by the action of the boys, and, I belie fact, I am certain, that it is not supporte the men at all.

2260. And you have only one case?—T the only case that has occurred. It is a co close to the town.

2261. You have only had one case, that 1887, where the men have refused to accep advice of the executive with regard t general wages question?—Yes.

2262. So that generally your men are nable to your rules and act under your ad —They always have been.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

2263. You made one remark with regard to the decreased output in Northumberland as compared with the increased output elsewhere?—Yes.

2264. According to the evidence that has been given before, the Commission has been led to believe that Unions tended to create confidence between employers and employed, and to prevent stoppages of work, misunderstandings, or decreased output. Now you alleged a decreased output in Northumberland as being due to the fact that you had a stronger Union—that the employers could not go into the market with so much confidence where the men had Unions?—Well, I must confess that it is my opinion that it was owing to the greater difficulty there was in reducing the cost of production in Northumberland as compared with other districts in which there were no Unions, that this decrease took place.

2265. But you say your members have, with the exception of this one case, accepted the advice of the executive. Now, how does that agree with the statement put in that you have had a decreased output because you had a Society, if the men were amenable to the rules and accepted your advice?—They have not always accepted the advice in the preliminary stages. We have been negotiating with the owners; the owners have been making a demand for a reduction, and that question has to pass through several stages before the committee as a rule speak out upon it. In the preliminary stage the question is submitted to the workmen. Delegate meetings are convened. They then appoint their representatives to go to the trade, and then report again back to the lodges, and all the time these negotiations are going on it has not unfrequently happened that from six to eight weeks have elapsed or expired, and consequently, on account of that delay, in my opinion the owners have felt that they have not been in a position to secure contracts.

2266. And that the only way of avoiding this difficulty is by a sliding scale?—Yes, that, in my opinion, is the best way of avoiding that difficulty. Of course you could avoid it in another way by having an agreement that whenever any difficulty arises between the workmen and the employers, the question in dispute should be submitted to the arbitration of an umpire. That would avoid the difficulty, but it would not, in my opinion, be so satisfactory as to have a sliding scale. You then know the principle on which you are working. If you submit the matter to arbitration you have not always the same umpire. You have not always the same principle laid down on which any demand is to be considered, and it is purely a matter of will as to whether a reduction or an advance shall be asked for three months or three years after the last adjustment. You have no fixed principles in the case of arbitration but you have a fixed principle in the case of a sliding scale.

2267. The employer can go into the market and make contracts, feeling sure his men will carry out their part of the agreement, and the men may rest assured that they will get their fair share?—Yes, that is the great advantage of a scale over any other method.

Sir *E. Harland.*

2268. I think you mentioned that some years ago the hours worked were from 10 to 12 hours a day?—Yes.

2269. How many years ago was that?—I should think about 35 years ago. It was very general in Northumberland for the hewer to work from 9 to 12 hours a day.

2270. Do you consider that the reduction in the hours, whether it is compulsory or by custom, has been brought about owing to the individual desire on the part of the workmen to limit their hours, or that it has been in consequence of a sort of a generally recognised arrangement brought about by the Trade Societies?—I should think by desire on the part of the workmen to reduce their hours whenever it was opportune for them to do so. I think that the opportunity for reducing the hours was afforded them when the principle of blasting became general in the county.

2271. And have they been able to earn as much since the hours were reduced as they did before?—Yes, I think they have earned more than they earned before. It is questionable, however, whether they are earning as much now as they would earn if they were working a longer time. But they are earning more now than they earned before, largely because of the different method of getting the coal.

2272. That is to say, since the introduction of blasting a portion of the hard work has now been eliminated?—Yes.

2273. And, perhaps, also by the introduction of machines for drilling; have those drilling machines been introduced into your county?—Yes, within the last 10 or 12 years. It would not be more than 12 or 13 years since the first drilling machines were taken in. They are not drilling machines in the same sense as those spoken of by Mr. Toyn as having been introduced into the Cleveland mines. They are what you might term mechanical drills worked by hand.

2274. They turn a handle and thus produce the revolutions of the drill?—Just so.

2275. Is it your opinion that owing to the introduction of blasting and mechanical appliances for making borings for the blasts that the more severe work of mining has been lessened without a reduction in the amount of wages earned?—Yes, I think that blasting is easier than the method of getting coal that preceded it.

2276. By wedging down?—Yes. But still it is, perhaps, as hard work with the mechanical drills that the workmen have adopted as was the other mode of drilling which it has superseded.

2277. The jumping you mean?—Yes. But still I think that the men will have saved, where they do blast the coal, from a quarter of

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

an hour to 20 minutes a day by the use of these mechanical drills. In fact we made an application to the coal trade some six or seven years ago for an advance of wages in consequence of the advantage that the owners were getting by the workmen having purchased and begun to use these mechanical drills. Trade, however, was not very prosperous at that time and nothing was conceded, but we elicited this from our investigation of the matter that fully a quarter of an hour or 20 minutes was saved by each man who had introduced these mechanical drills.

2278. And you sought, therefore, to have some little advantage from the introduction of these mechanical appliances similar to what the employers were having?—Yes.

2279. You wished to share in the advantage all round?—Yes.

2280. Then from that it would almost appear that the miners worked 10 or 12 hours a day for a certain wage with a given amount of hard work, and that since then they have worked shorter hours, and that even during that time the work has not been so severe as it used to be?—I should think that they will expend much more energy per minute or per hour that they are working than they did before over the longer period.

2281. Under the old arrangement of longer hours had you instances of the workmen earning sufficient to build their own little houses, or start shops, or in any way turn to advantage what they had been able to save from their earnings; in other words: did you find any thrift amongst any of them, or even isolated instances of it?—I should think that they were very rare indeed at that time.

2282. With regard to houses you might almost say that the inducement would not perhaps arise, from the fact that in most cases the houses are owned by the colliery proprietors?—That is so, yes; there would not be the same inducement.

2283. Such an investment would not be so readily open to them?—No, of course not.

2284. Were there any other methods of saving and putting by or turning over the money in the olden time?—I should think it would be a very rare occurrence indeed, that any of them would have sufficient money to save after keeping themselves.

2285. Are there any instances of that kind now, under the better state of things, the better wages and the shorter hours, so that the miners when off work may be a little bit thrifty?—The workmen are certainly in a very much better position now than they were at the time you are referring to—very much so. Wages are considerably higher, and hours, of course, shorter.

2286. But you are not able to point to many instances of miners investing their earnings, or as you say you are not able to point to cases where the earnings are sufficient to enable them to save?—I should think in Northumberland that nine-tenths of the workmen, perhaps even

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

a larger proportion than that, are members of co-operative stores, and a very considerable number of them have rather large amounts invested in the co-operative stores. A few of them also have their money invested in cottage property.

2287. The colliery owners do not start stores to provide the necessaries?—No. The men do all that themselves; in fact, at one colliery, at the pit that I worked at some years ago, we commenced a co-operative dairy, and had 14 cows, supplying ourselves with milk, and that is going on yet.

2288. I suppose investments in co-operative stores in cases where a colliery is laid idle have proved very disastrous for those who had put their money in them?—Mr. Nixon reminds me that in the case of a store that was wound up on account of the colliery being largely reduced they paid each subscriber his capital in full, and that, of course, would necessarily happen with a store that was in a sound position.

2289. Are the miners in your district generally sober, or is it to be feared that they spend the little balance that remains over, after providing for their necessaries, in drink?—I believe the Northumberland miners are generally credited with being the most sober and steady class of miners in the whole country. From time to time that has been told us by our colliery owners as a body, and in the various arbitrations that we have held in relation to wages, that fact has been brought out over and over again by the owners in the cases presented to the umpire.

2290. Since the hours were shortened to, say, eight hours down the mine and eight hours in bed, what has become of the remaining eight hours?—That condition of things does not exist at all. That is not the condition of things in Northumberland. It is not eight hours down the pit and eight hours in bed. At some collieries—those that are termed the short-hour colliery—the men are down the pit about 6 hours 35 minutes. At the long-hour collieries they are down about from 7 hours and 20 minutes to 7 hours and 30 minutes. Well then the men are pretty much like other people I daresay. I do not know whether, if you met them in the town, you would be able to distinguish them from ordinary people that you might meet in the street.

2291. Still my question, I am afraid, remains unanswered; for you may take it that instead of being more than eight hours down the pit the men are less than eight hours down the pit?—The boys are more than eight; the men are less than eight.

2292. We will take it in round numbers: they are eight hours down in the pit, and eight hours in bed, what becomes of the other eight hours?—They attend reading rooms. They have a mechanics' institution at every colliery I should say, and as I said before, they are nearly all members of co-operative societies, and they are interested in seeing those societies successfully carried on. Then, no doubt, some of them

5 *August* 1891.] Mr. R. YOUNG and Mr. J. NIXON. [*Continued.*

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

take an interest in sports of different sorts, just like other people.

2293. Do you remember the great strike in Newcastle, about 20 years ago, for shorter hours—from 60 to 54 hours, or something of that kind?—We had no strike. You are, I think, referring to the engineers' strike.

2294. Yes?—Of course we have no connexion with them. We had no strike at that time or about that time. It was in 1871, the engineers' strike.

2295. Do you remember that one of the arguments in favour of the shorter hours then put forward was that it would give the men time to improve themselves, attending classes and that sort of thing?—Yes.

2296. Now, taking merely your mining friends, do you think that that has been taken advantage of since the hours were reduced generally?—As a matter of fact, we have Science and Art classes in a considerable number of the colliery villages in Northumberland, and we also had, a few years ago, lectures under the University Extension Scheme, and a considerable number of our members have taken honours in connexion with those classes and lectures.

2297. Are not those very big words, "Science and Art classes" among the colliers?—No. I believe it is a matter of fact also that a larger per centage of passes have been recorded amongst the miners in connexion with these classes than the average—I might go further.

2298. Has their very much improved social condition and intellectual culture led any of them to use those eight hours that we are speaking of, that they have in hand, to some personal advantage to themselves?—It would be to their personal advantage if they have nothing else than a wider knowledge of the world.

2299. Take the case of a young man from say 20 to 40 years of age, do you think that he could employ his time very much better under all the circumstances than by spending two or three hours more down the pit, and earning more money and putting it by for a rainy day, or when he is an old man?—I think if a man can earn sufficient to enable him to live at a fair standard of comfort by working seven or eight hours, he is much better than he would be if he worked two or three hours longer and earned considerably higher wages. If a man works say 10, 11, or 12 hours, the last three or four hours above the seven or eight hours, if he works with any amount of vigour and energy, will exhaust him far more than the first seven or eight hours.

2300. But if by your arrangement the man passes through the best part of his life not having earned more than he was just able to live comfortably upon, do you think that points to his being able to knock off hard work and take life a little easier when he becomes old and so not able to work. Where is the money to come from then to support him when in the course of nature he is no longer able to work?—I should think if the men in Northumberland were to work two or three hours longer than they work at present, with the same amount of vigour, or as much as they could exert during the last two or three hours that they would be unfit for work much earlier than they are by working the number of hours they work at present, so that if you take their life right through they would be much worse off than they are at the present time.

2301. We have had some very excellent witnesses before us here who devoted their early days to practical mining and they did not appear to me to have injured their health in the slightest degree by it. Now do you think that an hour or two a day more of work of that kind, limiting it to say 12 hours a day during the best part of their life would injure their health and impair their vigour in their old age?—I should think if they were doing that in the best part of their life that they would be likely to continue it a little after the best part of their life, and their habits would be formed, I have no doubt, very largely by the amount of money that they might be able to earn, and if they earned say 8*s.* a day by working 10 hours instead of say 6*s.* by working eight hours, they would probably be no better off by getting the 8*s.* for the 10 hours than they are by getting 6*s.* for the eight hours.

2302. Would not they be 2*s* a day better off?—But how much in physique would they be worse?

2303. That is just the question. Suppose they were strong men and able men and willing men, would you be disposed to say to these men, "you shall not work more than eight hours"?—I do not know whether anyone can fairly prescribe what another shall do. But if a large body of workmen agree, with something like unanimity, that it is advantageous to work under a certain system and under certain regulations, I think that they act wisely in laying down some sort of regulation, which they, after full consideration, have concluded will be well for them to adopt.

2304. But that is going upon the supposition that a man at 60 must be called upon to do as much work as a man of 30?—No, not necessarily, because if a man from, say, 20 to 40 is able to earn with no greater exertion, 6*s.* a day (and they work by the piece)—I do not know whether I may infer that you are aware of that——

2305. Yes, perfectly?—Well then, if men from 20 to 40 are able to earn 6*s.* a day in eight hours, and after maintaining a certain standard of comfort save a surplus, it is not necessary that they should have 6*s.* from 40 to 60 in order to maintain the same standard of comfort, indeed, I hardly think that it would require as much to maintain that standard of comfort between 40 and 60 as it requires between 20 and 40.

2306. I presume you have not arrived at the age of 60 yet, but yet I suppose as you grow older you will not find that there will be fewer demands upon you. If a man is surrounded with a family, has he not children, boys or girls, to do something for?—Yes; but everything considered, putting on the one side the advantages

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

of having an increased wage and the disadvantage of having to work longer than what you may say is a reasonable number of hours, I have no doubt at all that the family would be better off by the workers working that reasonable number of hours than by working an unreasonably long time and having the higher wage.

2307. Would you call 10 hours a day an unreasonably long time to work?—Yes, working as the Northumberland miners work, I should say so.

2308. I suppose you are aware of the hours worked in your own works?—Yes.

2309. Work on the surface?—Yes.

2310. I presume you will admit there is a great deal of that which is pretty heavy work?—Yes.

2311. And have you known in your experience men work 12 and 14 hours at that work by the piece?—I believe that has been so; but still I would hardly conclude that they are better off than they would have been by working eight or nine or ten hours, even had they earned less money.

2312. Did you ever know a case of a man having injured himself by too much work, putting on one side his having drunk excessively after his work?—Of course one can only draw inferences, but I have no doubt at all of it. The change goes on imperceptibly, just as we grow old. You cannot say that this man will look much worse to-morrow than he looks to-day, because he is working 12 or 13 hours; but there is no doubt at all that it is a fair deduction to say that he will be worse 10 years hence if he continues doing so than he would be if he worked shorter hours.

2313. Still, you yourself are not aware of any examples of men who by simple hard work, an hour or two extra a day, have injured their health?—I could not summon before you, I daresay, any individuality; but I have a sort of vague recollection of persons having injured themselves through hard work.

2314. What would the difference be in duration of life, judging by your experience, as between a man who has done nothing at all, being a mere drone, and a man who has worked hard?—I would not recommend a man to do nothing. I do not think he is as well off as he would be, physically, if he did something.

2315. Then, at that rate, it would point to this: that if he worked an hour or two more it would not do him very much harm?—It depends. If you take the case of a man who does nothing, he would be the better for work; but if you take the case of a man who works seven or eight hours, and who puts any amount of vigour into his work, he would be worse if he worked longer.

2316. Then you are not disposed to think that a couple of hours more would be desirable, even though it would bring more money to his family?—Everything considered, and speaking of our district, I would say no.

Mr. *Dale.*

2317. I suppose in your industry the individual man could not choose his own hours. It must be the class whose hours are fixed?—Yes, that is to say, it would disarrange and disorganise the whole work of the colliery if the individual were to choose his own hours of work.

2318 The question of hours is therefore a question for a class?—Yes.

2319. Not for an individual?—No.

2320. That is owing to their interdependence upon each other in the progress of the work?—Yes, that is so.

Sir *E. Harland.*

2321. And it is the class as I gather from you that has settled and determined upon shorter hours?—Yes.

2322. So that it is the very same class which to-day has determined upon short hours, which 20 years ago determined upon longer hours?—No. They did not necessarily determine for longer hours. It was the condition of things then existing which made it necessary, I have no doubt, that they should work the number of hours they then worked.

2323. What was the difference in the conditions, may I ask?—As I have stated before, wedging then made it necessary for them to be in a certain length of time together; besides, in the whole of the industries of the world at that time, workmen worked longer hours than they work to-day. Of course you cannot by any artificial means raise the wages of men of one industry unless there has been corresponding improvement in other industries. If you were to do that, then you simply injure that industry with labourers which by any artificial means has managed for the moment to improve its position.

2324. Do you not thereby destroy the individual independence, and prevent a man of superior intelligence from, by superior strength and superior skill, allowing to the front of his fellows?—No, I do not think we do. I think that the system under which we are working is an advantage to everyone concerned.

2325. You think it is an advantage to keep every man down on the same level?—No, to lift everyone up to a higher level.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

2326. With regard to the hours of labour of boys, were they fixed so recently as 1887 by the Mines Regulation Act?—No, they were fixed by the Act of 1872, which came into force in January 1873.

2327. Is it not the fact that they are fixed by that Act at 54 per week?—Yes; but that was simply a continuation of the clause in the 1872 Act.

2328. Are 54 hours a week worked by boys now under that Act?—Yes.

2329. I want to ask you whether you consider that the hours now worked by boys are injurious to their health or not?—I have no

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

2345. Consequently the number of hours per day was less?—Yes.

2346. Will you tell us what they were?—Yes; at that time they would be about six and a half from bank to bank, and now they are about seven and a half from bank to bank. It was found necessary in November 1877, on account of our trade, gradually, month after month disappearing, to work longer to enable our district to compete with other districts; and again in November 1878 a further extension of half-an-hour per shift was made. One of the half-hours was not put into operation, that was the half-hour, I believe, in November 1877, so that there was only half-an-hour for the two shifts, but it comes out to something like 15 per cent.

Mr. *Burt.*

2347. Was that a result of the recommendation by an umpire?—Yes, by Lord Herschell, who was umpire in an arbitration case we had in August 1877, when the demands of the owners were not sustained; they were dismissed, but he saw that the owners and the district generally were labouring under considerable difficulties, and he recommended the men to increase their working time, and the men on the strength of that recommendation agreed to do so. Then in November 1878 the owners made an application for a further extension of time, and the workmen agreed to it.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

2348. About how long had the six-and-a-half hours' day prevailed?—From 1873 to November 1877.

2349. And it was in consequence of a decline in trade compared with other mining districts in the country, that the extension was recommended, in the first instance, by an umpire?—Yes.

2350. And half-an-hour granted them, and afterwards application was made by the owners for an additional half-hour?—An additional half-hour per shift, which meant an hour per day.

2351. And that still obtains—the seven-and-a-half hours?—Yes, that still obtains.

2352. Is there any movement with a view of getting it back to the old conditions, the six-and-a-half?—No, there is no movement in that direction, we have from time to time resolutions sent in asking that steps should be taken to reduce the hours to seven from bank to bank, but we have never had any resolution that I recollect asking that the time should be reduced down to six-and-a-half.

2353. If brought to seven, that would place you on the same footing as Durham County, would it not?—Yes, it would.

2354. You have given us the wages per year, I think?—Yes.

2355. In addition there is a house provided by the owner?—Yes.

2356. Some of the houses are very good, I believe?—Yes, some are fairly good.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

2357. Others are——?—Very indifferent.

2358. Do you know the houses at Seghill, for instance?—Yes.

2359. How would you describe those houses?—They were built a very long time ago, probably 60 or 70 years ago—I should think 70 years ago, and the colliery is pretty well worked. Many of them have just one room on a flat and an attic, and they are red tiled houses, very low, not more, I should think, than about 6 ft. to the eaves, but they are a very old class of house.

2360. Apart from their peculiar construction which may have been very ornamental in its day perhaps, what is the actual condition of the rooms that they occupy, are they properly habitable, in your opinion?—They could be very much better. There is room for a great deal of improvement, they are not ideal houses at all; but I suppose it would be an exceedingly difficult matter to induce anyone who has the capital invested there with a pit that has worked so long to build a fresh lot of houses.

2361. I was wondering whether if the miners received the full pay and made a choice of the house that they would pay rent for they would be content with such a house as they are compelled to live in now in Seghill?—Not if they could secure better houses in the district—I should think not, but there are no houses about yonder which they could obtain.

2362. Concerning the falling off of trade in the winter in consequence of the freezing of the Baltic—I understood you to say that about 20 per cent. of the trade falls off?—Yes, that is so.

2363. I am not sure how far the difficulty is met by distributing the work over the total number of men, or how far some of the pits are really closed down, and therefore some men entirely out of work between December and April?—In a normal state of trade none of the pits are closed, only every pit almost in the county works perhaps two days or two days and a half less for about five months in the winter than they work during the summer.

2364. So that that is really the way in which it is met?—Yes.

Sir *E. Harland.*

2365. Two days and a half per week?—No, per fortnight; we know about nothing except a fortnight down yonder, and we are apt to think it is the same with everybody else.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

2366. Do you work 11 or 12 shifts a fortnight under busy conditions?—Eleven.

2367. In consequence of getting over the difficulty by distributing it practically over the total number of men, you have not been called upon to make any proposal whereby this difficulty should be met in the manner you would have been had this 20 per cent. been totally out of employment and the others remaining in full work?—That has never been a matter for consideration; it has never entered our minds, I daresay, as to how we could deal with a phase of the subject like that.

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Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

2368. It is not thought necessary perhaps to deal with the question at all; you think it practically settles itself, and that the total earnings per year cover the slack time?—We could not by any means that we can imagine increase the working time. Of course, the customers are unable to take our coal. We simply have to send the coal to the people who will purchase it, and when there is not a demand for the whole of it the pits cannot work.

2369. The reason I am pressing the question is because other witnesses who have been before the Commission have also lodged the same complaint with regard to the irregularity of their employment due to exactly the same cause. This takes place in the shipping business, and witnesses representing that business have made proposals as to how the difficulty should be met, because in their case the work, as a rule, is not distributed over the total number of men, but a per-centage, perhaps 20 per cent. or 25 per cent., is thrown out of work during those months. They have made proposals which, in their opinion, would meet the difficulty to some extent, but as you succeed in distributing it over the whole of the men, you do not come with any proposals in the same way?—No.

2370. I should like to know a little more concerning the co-operative dairy which you have been conducting, and which I understand is still going on and flourishing?—Yes.

2371. Is it as successful now as formerly?—It is very successful; they have got for very many years 10 per cent. upon all the capital invested. It was established in 1873; it has gone on ever since, and for the last nine or ten years I should think it has averaged 10 per cent.

2372. In what part of Northumberland is that?—At the North Seaton Colliery.

2373. Were the funds provided entirely by the workmen?—Yes. The owners of the colliery had some land taken from the landlord, and they willingly, as soon as ever application was made to them, handed over those fields at the same rent they were paying for them, and in addition to that, they found the capital to build the byres, and the men pay interest upon the capital; but for the purchase of the cows the whole of the capital is found by the workmen. That has paid, as I have stated, 10 per cent. for the last nine or ten years. In addition to that, they have a reserve fund which covers the whole liability of the members, so that if the whole of the cows were swept off there would still be sufficient to pay the members their capital.

2374. Is that co-operative dairy kept distinct from the distributive stores to which you told us nine-tenths of your members belong?—Yes, it is entirely distinct from the store, they have a store at the colliery as well, which I daresay provides the members with everything, tailoring, grocery, butchery, shoemaking, &c.

2375. Was I correct in understanding you to say that nine-tenths of your members or thereabouts deal at the co-operative stores?—Yes.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

2376. In connexion with the hours of labour I have tried to understand the particular difficulty that obtains in your county with respect to the boys, and the difficulties that would follow upon a reduction of their hours. I am afraid I have not been able to quite grasp it, and I should like to trouble you with another question or two respecting the point. Do you know the conditions that obtain in Lancashire, whether the hewers there have one or two shifts?—There is only one shift of hewers.

2377. And one shift of boys?—One shift of boys.

2378. And the boys' shift is about the same length, is it not?—Yes, about the same length as the hewers.

2379. I cannot quite see why two shifts of hewers are called for in Northumberland and Durham when there is only one shift in other parts of the Kingdom?—I should think that if they worked upon the same principle as they work in Lancashire, the hours of the hewers and those of the boys would be about as long as they are in Lancashire. It is not the case, as it is often assumed I am afraid, that the boys in Northumberland work longer time than the boys work in other parts of the country, but it is the case that the men work less in Northumberland, and the hours of the men are compared with the hours of the boys, and people cry out what a shame it is for the boys to have to work longer than the men. The fact of the matter is, if you go into the Midlands, and into Wales too, I should think you will find in a normal state of the trade that the boys there work about as long as the boys work in Northumberland, only the men work much longer.

2380. Than the men in Northumberland?—Yes.

2381. Then, if the men in Northumberland were working nine or 10 hour shifts, one shift of boys would be sufficient?—Yes, one shift of boys would be sufficient.

2382. And one shift of hewers would be sufficient for the boys?—Yes.

2383. When we get—is it below the eight hours—is that about the time at which the line is to be drawn, when the men work below eight hours, then two shifts of hewers are required?—The men go down at half-past three o'clock in the morning, and the back shift men descend about 10 when their partners are liberated by them and come away to the shaft as soon as ever the back-shift go in. Then the back-shift men ascend at five. The boys go down two hours or two-and-a-half hours after the fore-shift men descend, and they stay till the back-shift has finished, and come away to ascend before the back-shift.

2384. May I try to put it in another way: if we have the hewers working nine-hour shifts, then one shift of boys is sufficient to meet the case there, and that one shift of hewers at nine hours is sufficient to keep the boys going on all right?—The one shift of hewers would scarcely be able to keep the boys going nine hours, they would go about seven hours.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

2385. What is the practice in other counties, do you know—say Lancashire?—I believe they go in all together. I am not sure of this, but I think they all go in together there, and that in most cases they assist the hewers, they go into the face and assist them, that is, what we call the putters do. In Northumberland, however, the coal being rather hard the men go in 2½ hours before to prepare the coal for the boys coming down.

2386. Then it is absolutely impossible, is it, to have one shift of boys at eight hours, whilst the present hours obtain with the hewers?—Yes, it is impossible.

2387. And one shift of hewers would not be sufficient to keep the boys going with the hewers' present hours? The output would be very much diminished, the cost of production would be very greatly increased, wages would consequently fall, and in the end it would be much worse for all concerned.

2388. Is that the basis of the objection on the part of the Northumberland miners to a fixed eight hours' day?—Yes, that is so.

2389-90. It is not that you would not take a pleasure in having the boys' hours reduced to eight a day—you would rather like that, would you not; you are favourable to that, providing it is does not interfere with trade?—Yes, we should be glad to have the hours brought down to the lowest possible point, provided it was shown to be an advantage for all concerned. It would no doubt be an advantage to the boys for a certain length of time to have their time made two or three hours a day shorter than it is at the present time; but then there are several matters contingent upon that reduction of hours. Taking the whole of the effects of such an alteration into consideration there is no doubt, in the opinion of those who have a practical knowledge of the question, that it would be worse for all concerned to make that alteration.

2391. When you stated that if the boys were reduced to eight hours a day during the period of their juvenescence, then afterwards they would have to be increased an hour-and-a-half a day as men?—Yes, from an hour to an-hour-and-a-half.

2392. You did not mean that that would apply to the hewers, of course?—Yes, it would apply to the hewers.

2393. I do not quite gather then why that change would come about if the conditions that obtain to-day with regard to hewers still prevail?—That is a hypothesis which is altogether out of the consideration of practical men in the North, I am afraid. You could not well have a single shift of 7 hours or 7½ hours, the cost of production would be so enormously increased that many of the pits would be closed down in a very short time.

2394. It has been alleged against the Northumberland miners that they have shown opposition to the eight hours' work day which is desired to be fixed by some, because they have a suspicion that the hours of those workmen who are now below eight would be forced back by law to the eight; but that is not your fear at all, is it? It is because the relationship between the boys' shifts and the men's shifts would necessitate that alteration, not that you could fear the effect of the law if other people had it?—I should think that there is some consideration and importance attached to the possibility of the alteration lengthening the mens' hours. I have no doubt of that. But the chief objection is that it would be undesirable, taking a broad view of it, and that while it would be an advantage to a boy, as a boy, leaving out the reduced wage that he and his parents would get by the increased cost of production, yet taking the boy's career, as a boy and as a man, he would be worse off than if the alteration were not made.

2395. I presume that the argument about the increased cost of production has always been used when the men have tried to reduce their hours?—Yes, and, of course, quite reasonably so.

2396. Has it increased the cost of production?—The cost of production has been decreased by the men working longer time. If you take from 1874, when the hours were shortened, up to 1876 and 1877, there is not the slightest reason to doubt that the cost of production was greater when the shorter time was worked than it was after the men increased their working time. I have a statement here showing that the men increased their production directly after they increased the working time.

2397. But this 50 tons——?—Independently of that, I have some colliery cases here showing that they increased their produce by working longer time.

Mr. *Dale.*

2398. Will you send such a statement as a sort of supplement to the official replies you have given to the printed questions issued by the Commission?—Yes, certainly.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

2399. You would not say that the extra 50 tons per man output since 1874 was due entirely to the additional hour, would you?—No, I would not state that, as a matter of fact, but I think, in all probability, that it is due to the addition of time worked.

2400. You think it is?—Yes.

2401. I understood that the Durham and Northumberland miners generally oppose legislative restriction, saying that while you would succeed in reducing the hours by developing the desire for it on the part of the men individually you would also develope those qualities which would enable you to put out a greater amount in a given number of hours. But apparently you had reached the limit when you had got down to 7 or 7½, and had to go back to that from 6½?—Yes, that is a fact. There is a time, I think, in which, say, if you take eight hours, if a man worked hard during that time, or if you take 7½ as they now work in Northumberland, in which they can produce the maximum quantity of coal; but if they go

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

beyond that, according to the way they work in Northumberland, they probably would not send away much more coal, if they go below that they would send away less coal.

2402. Concerning the enginemen, what number of hours are they worked?—Mr. Lambton is to be called here from Durham, and he will give evidence on that point, I think.

2403. They are not in your Union?

(Mr. *Nixon.*) No.

2404. Have you a federation such as they have in Durham?

(Mr. *Young.*) Not with the enginemen.

2405. The Durham miners have a federation, have they not?—Yes.

2406. Now concerning the working of your joint committee, it was stated by some witnesses whom we have had before us that there is a difference between the method adopted in Northumberland and the method adopted in Durham, and it was also stated that the Durham method did not work satisfactorily, because the joint committee got choked up with business. To what extent must there be grievances in connexion with a colliery before you are justified in bringing it before the joint committee; can one flat bring it before the joint committee, one seam, or must it be the whole colliery?—The rule is this, that if the average of a seam or colliery be 5 per cent. below the standard average of the district, then the workmen can apply to the joint committee for an advance of wages, and, if they prove to the committee that they are 5 per cent. below the standard average to which they are entitled, then the joint committee will concede an advance. If on the other hand a flat is very low—6*d.*, 1*s.*, or 10 per cent., 15 per cent., or 20 per cent. below the average which they are entitled to, although the colliery's average is not 5 per cent. below the district average, they can appeal to the joint committee for a revision of prices. Then the committee will go into the matter and they will perhaps take so much off a flat that is high and give so much to the flat that is low, and so adjust prices as to enable them all to get somewhat near the average.

2407. Is it a common practice for a flat or a portion of a mine to lodge a grievance before the joint committee to get it adjusted?—It is a very rare occurrence. Cases of that sort are generally settled at home between the workmen and the manager.

2408. How often does your joint committee meet?—Once in every two months.

2409. Does one day's sitting enable you to get over the business before you?—Yes, we have never had to adjourn. I do not recollect a single occasion that we have had to adjourn.

2410. Then the total number of men employed of course is considerably different in Durham to what it is in Northumberland?—Yes.

2411. In your case it is about 30,000?—Yes.

2412. Just one point concerning the mechanical drills—they have been entirely beneficial so far as they have affected the lives of the workmen, have they not?—They have been a considerable advantage in enabling the workmen to do more work than they could do without them.

2413. Did the introduction of those mechanical drills result in a reduction of the price per ton?—The mens' prices.

2414. Yes?—I should think not; it will all have been compounded in the variations in wages which have taken place since then.

Mr. *Mawdsley.*

2415. You referred to the cottages which are provided as, I understand, by the employers?—Yes.

2416. Are the rents of these cottages deducted out of the wages earned by the men?—Not at all; they are provided free by the colliery-owners for their workmen; they are owned by the colliery-owners, and are given to the workmen free.

2417. Then the price per ton of coal is so much and the price of a cottage is not reckoned in the wages, but as you say is given to the workmen free?—Yes.

2418. Are there any places where the owners have not got these cottages?—Yes, we have a few collieries that have no cottages; there are other collieries, a great number of other collieries, where they have not a sufficient number of cottages for their workmen, and in those cases they allow the men so much rent money in lieu of free houses.

2419. So that practically it comes to the same thing; it really is deducted from the wages, because where there are no cottages the men get more wages?—No, not at all; the same standard average is recognised for the whole of them, but the men are paid so much money in lieu of free houses which is not taken into the average wage.

2420. Exactly, but where there are no cottages the men get more money, the men get money which they do not get where there are cottages?—Yes.

2421. In actual practice then, it comes to the same thing; it is stopped out of the mens' wages?—Yes, that is so.

2422. Just one more question on this number of working hours. If you work 10 hours in place of eight or seven, or whatever it might be, would that be likely to throw a certain proportion of the men now employed out of employment?—I should hardly think it would, not in our county; if the produce was increased it might affect the workmen in other counties. If in Northumberland, by the men working a longer time, they send away a larger produce, I do not think that any of the men in Northumberland would be thrown out of employment thereby, but it would certainly have some effect upon workmen engaged in competiting districts.

2423. You think to the extent of the increase of production it would throw out of employment either somebody in Northumberland or somebody somewhere else who was competing with you?—Yes, it would have that effect.

2424. So that with an increase of population, do you think it is better that we should reduce

Mr. *Mawdsley*—continued.

our hours of working and find employment for the increase of population, do you think that is better than keeping up long hours and letting a certain proportion go out of work?—I hardly think that it is a question of population exactly; it scarcely strikes me to be one that would have any relation to that, because it depends, I think, whether you can by working a certain number of hours send away a larger quantity of produce than by working another certain number of hours. If you increase your production, it matters not whether it is coal or anything else, and you increase the capital of the country thereby, there would be better wages for the increasing population than there would be if you curtailed the number of working hours and decreased production. There would be less capital for re-productive purposes.

Mr. *Austin.*

2425. As regards the state of employment, I think you said that in this respect you have nothing to complain of?—Nothing to complain of.

2426. Am I to understand from that that the members of your Association are satisfied with the existing arrangements for the safety and protection of life?—There is nothing that we know of, I daresay, that would materially improve our position in that respect.

2427. Are accidents numerous in the year in your collieries?—No. We have fewer, considerably fewer, I believe, than the average for the United Kingdom, almost fewer than that of any other district.

2428. Have accidents increased or decreased since the introduction of drilling machines?—I might say, as a practical workman, the drilling machines have no relation to or bearing upon accidents at all; it is simply another method of putting in a hole; the man has to be practically in the same position whether it is a mechanical drill he is turning or a hand drill that he is hitting; it does not affect the question at all.

Mr. *Dale.*

2429. Is one reason why you do not look with favour upon the legislative regulation of the hours of adult labour that you have found in Northumberland the advantages of a system of reducing your hours in certain states of trade, increasing them again and yet contemplating a reduction again, adapting them in fact to the varying conditions of trade?—Just so, that is one of our strong reasons for desiring to be left free so that we who are more conversant with the technicalities of the trade and the general condition of the trade should be able to adjust our position to the varying condition of trade from time to time. Of course, my own opinion, as I expressed it before, is that, from an economic point of view, it is absolutely impossible for Parliament to advantageously fix the hours.

2430. I think that some doubt has arisen as to what was the inference you drew yourself

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

and desired the Commission to draw from Table No. 2. You pointed out that according to that table, in the years 1874 to 1879 inclusive, when no sliding scale prevailed, and when Northumberland was highly organised as regards its Union, there was a decrease in the output of Northumberland to the extent of 14·35 per cent., whilst in other important parts, such as South Wales and Scotland, and indeed in the United Kingdom as a whole, there was an increase in the output?—Yes.

2431. Then you pointed out that in the succeeding period, 1880 to 1886 inclusive, the output of Northumberland increased to the extent of 32·7 per cent., whilst the output in the United Kingdom only increased to the extent of 17·8 per cent.?—Yes.

2432. I think there was some misapprehension as to what was the exact inference you drew, or desired us to draw, and I am going to read to you my note of the substance of what I understood you to have stated—it does not profess to be your words at all, but I would ask you whether it represents what you desired us to understand to be your view, whether you will confirm it or correct it, as the case may be. My note was that, in the unorganised districts, output was maintained, or indeed, increased, because the absence of organisation prevented the men pressing for a full share of the prevailing activity; that hence, there being no claims, there were no disputes and consequently no interruption to work; but, on the other hand, the more organised district of Northumberland, claiming for labour its share of the better state of trade, but not having a standard for measuring that share, disputes and suspensions of work took place, with consequent reduction of output, partly the direct result of work being occasionally suspended, and partly because the colliery owner could not conduct his sales or other operations with freedom and certainty; that from this you infer that a self-adjusting sliding-scale system would maintain output, and also give the worker his share of prosperity. Does that correctly represent your view?—Yes, that is entirely my view of the matter. I think——

2433. All I desire to know is whether that correctly summarises the inferences that you drew, and desired the Commission to draw, from your statements?—Yes, entirely.

(*To* Mr. *Nixon.*)

2434. You are, I believe, the president of the Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Association?—Yes.

2435. And you have heard the evidence given by Mr. Young?—Yes.

2436. May we take it that you generally concur in what he has said?—Yes.

2437. But we understand there are certain questions upon which you desire to give additional information?—Yes; particularly in relation to local strikes, the sacrificed members in our district, and the out-of-work payments.

5 *August* 1891.] Mr. R. YOUNG and Mr. J. NIXON. [*Continued.*

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

2438. Can you state how many strikes and lock-outs there have been in your district?—We had three strikes in 1880, one in 1881, one in 1884, one in 1885, one in 1886, a general strike in 1887, and four others, two in 1888, one in 1889, and two in 1890.

2439. Can you tell us what those strikes cost to your Association?—Yes, the total cost of these strikes for 11 years is 6,310*l.* 7*s.* 9*d.*

2440. That is the local strikes?—Yes. Most of these strikes were at collieries that were outside of the Masters' Association, but connected with our Association. The owners of five of the collieries were members of the Coal-owners' Association, viz., Seghill, Bebside, Burradon, West Cramlington, and Choppington. At Seghill the dispute was as to the workmen's fire coal. It was a question which had been taken up by the men which appealed to our committee, and they appealed to the Joint Committee on the question. As it was not considered a Joint Committee question, all that the Joint Committee could do was to give us their moral support in the matter, and they passed resolutions from time to time, recommending the owner to comply with the requests, and to supply a better quality and a better quantity of fire coal at Seghill. It went on from time to time, and I might say on one occasion, when we had it before the Joint Committee, the employers did not appear on that occasion to defend this question, and the coal trade secretary, the late Mr. Bunning, was requested to write to Mr. Laycock on this subject, urging him to comply with the request. I believe it is fair to say that the owners at that time, perhaps, had some difficulty in supplying the coal, as they had done formerly when trade was better; trade being bad they had a difficulty in getting the quantity of the small coal, and they complained from time to time, and said that they were doing their best. However, the thing went on, and it caused so much agitation until at last there was a strike for a short time. You will see that there was at Seghill 305*l.* 2*s.* spent on that strike. There were 271 members there, so that you see the strike was for a short time only—for about a week. After that the matter became arranged.

2441. Would you like to make any observation upon the other cases, Bebside for instance?—The Bebside strike was only a strike of two days' duration.

2442. Then I do not think we need dwell upon that?—I might just say, in a word, that the men were working on the Billy Fairplay system; that is, that they are paid nothing for small, but are paid on the round coal only. The screens got into a bad state and the owner was requested to repair them, and this dispute was on account of the screens being in a bad condition, but it only lasted two days.

2443. Then Burradon?—That is a case where the masters gave notice to enforce payment for supplying water to the workmen. The colliery generally had been supplied from wells and other conveniences about, and the water was brought

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

to the village. The men got up an agitation upon this point, and refused to pay for it. That was a strike which lasted about a week, and it was settled by agreeing to a compromise.

2444. Was that a dispute that the Joint Committee would have dealt with?—No, it was never before the Joint Committee; it was outside the Joint Committee altogether.

2445. Do you mean that it would have been regarded as outside the functions of the Joint Committee or the powers of the Joint Committee?—Yes, it was outside the functions of the Joint Committee.

2446. Now Cramlington?—Cramlington strike occurred in 1887, just at the commencement of the year. During 1886, which was a very bad year indeed for trade, and I do not know whether I should say what I was going to say or not—I was going to say we had a large number of men dismissed towards the back end of 1886, and they were on the funds at the commencement of 1887, on account of bad trade. That being so, the West Cramlington pit was stopped, and these men had the offer of commencing at a reduction of wages. The owners said that they could not keep the place going, but they might commence on a reduction of wages. Consequently it was contended to be a strike, inasmuch as they might have worked for a reduction of wages, and we paid them strike allowance.

2447. Was not that the period of 1887 when there was a general strike?—Yes.

2448. And this preceded that?—Yes, it just preceded it. I think the West Cramlington strike was in January, and the general strike did not commence until January 28; after the end of that strike there was a little time they were still idle. Now Choppington. This was another place where the owners had dismissed the men. In fact, one of the pits—there are two pits at Choppington—had been stopped, and at the other the men had been reduced in number. After this had been going on for some time they wanted the men to commence some part of the other pit, but to commence it at a reduction of 3*d.* per ton. This the men refused: consequently, the men being on stoppage, the pit not being working there at all, it did not come under the Joint Committee. The men refused to commence at this 3*d.* per ton reduction, and this money was paid in this strike rather than commence at 3*d.* per ton less than what they had left off at.

2449. I have added up the amounts appearing upon your schedule in respect of the five collieries whose owners belong to the Owners' Association, and the total is 2,571*l.* out of the 6,310*l.* Excluding Choppington, four of them amount to 883*l.*, the other one being 1,688*l.*, making the 2,571*l.* in respect of those five collieries out of the 6,310*l.*, the remainder having reference to disputes at collieries whose owners are not members of the Owners' Association?—That would be so.

2450. Have you any other point that you wish to bring before us?—These matters, of

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

course, never came before the Joint Committee at all. The only two local strikes here which were of any moment are the Del Benwell and Coanwood.

2451. Is there any other information that you would like to give the Commission?—I should like to state that the sacrificed allowance which we have paid is set down for the 11 years as 96*l.* 7*s.* 9*d.*

2452. Over 11 years?—Yes; that is a remarkably small amount for 11 years for an Association such as we have. There are not 30 cases in those years, and they were principally cases where there were some technical points in connexion with the dismissals, and the men had been contended to be unjustly dealt with, and we considered that they should be paid the sacrificed allowance. We have nothing special to say upon that point.

2453. I see, referring to the proof, that if you separate that amount of 97*l.* into the past five years and the antecedent period it is shown that during the past five years only 4*l.* 1*s.* was paid, or less than 1*l.* per year?—Yes.

2454. Those are the years from 1886 to 1890 inclusive?—Yes.

2455. Two pounds was paid in 1886, nothing in 1877, nothing in 1888, nothing in 1889, and 2*l.* 1*s.* in 1890?—Yes. The highest amount we have in any one year is 35*l.* 4*s.* 3*d.* Most of that sum was payable in connexion with a few collieries, three collieries, I think, which we have close on the borders of Cumberland. They are a good distance off us, and in every case there was a high sum to pay to shift the men away from that part.

2456. And probably even that small sum of 96*l.* has been paid to some extent to men not employed at the associated collieries?—Yes, in fact the cases that I have just spoken of, where the amount was 35*l.*, were not cases of associated collieries.

2457. What other point would you like to bring out?—I have here the figures showing the amount of out-of-work payment. For the 11 years from 1880 to 1890 inclusive, we have paid 16,682*l.* 3*s.* 11½*d.* in out-of-work payments.

2458. Those payments though have no relation whatever to strikes or disputes?—Not at all. Simply when any of our collieries are laid off for breakage of machinery, or for want of pit room, or where the men are dismissed for want of trade, we pay them a certain allowance, and that sum of 16,682*l.* represents the money that has been paid under that head over this number of years.

Mr. *Balfour.*

2459. What is the rate of the allowance?—1*s.* 6*d.* per working day to each man, and 5*s.* per mile for the first mile for shifting, and 1*s.* a mile afterwards to where the man shifts to.

Mr. *Balfour*—continued.

The subscription to the society is 6*d.* per fortnight, but if they do not work more than five days they are exempt from payment altogether.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

2460. I should be glad if you would kindly give us the entrance fees and contributions, and the benefits derived?—The entrance fees are 5*s.* for full members, and 2*s.* 6*d.* for half members, but I must say that we do not get it as an Association, it is kept at home for local purposes. The contribution is 6*d.* per fortnight.

(Mr. *Young.*) And it is not paid unless they work six or more days per fortnight.

(Mr. *Nixon.*) If they do not work six days they are exempt from payment, and if they are off sick they are exempt from payment.

2461. For that 6*d.* per fortnight what are the monetary benefits?—2*s.* per working day when striking, 1*s.* per head per week per child below 12 years of age. If they are out of work they are paid 1*s.* 6*d.* per working day, and the shifting allowance which I have already stated. We have been somewhat unfortunate in this sometimes. We pay whole collieries during bad trade; if they only work one day they are paid five days; and if they work two days only they are paid four days; if they work three they are paid two; if they work four they are paid nothing. I might say, in the year 1886, when trade was so bad, we paid a very large sum, 8,669*l.* 10*s.* 5*d.*, for men out of work. Some of the collieries were very unfortunately situated, and, I might say, that the Bebside Colliery only worked eight days the first two months of that year. That was a shocking state of things. Besides the allowance I have stated, there were subscriptions made by the men, and on two different occasions they gave money to the men at the collieries which had been working so badly; we gave 5,000*l.* odd to men who had been less unfortunate than their brethren.

2462. Is there any funeral benefit attached?—Yes, for every man who dies there is a legacy of 2*l.*, that is all that is paid as a death legacy.

2463. Then the sick benefit is another department altogether?—There is no sick benefit at all.

2464. And the permanent relief fund?—The permanent relief fund is a separate association. Our members are in the Foresters and different kinds of societies for that. We have never had any sick fund connected with the Union.

2465. The Northumberland Miners' Union stands by itself entirely?—Yes.

2466. It is not federated with either of the others?—No.

(Mr. *Young.*) It is with Durham and Cleveland.

(Mr. *Nixon.*) Yes, that is the National Union.

2467. The National Miners' Union?—Yes.

The witnesses withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 11 o'clock.

SIXTH DAY.

Commission Room. Westminster Hall, Thursday, 6th August 1891.

PRESENT:

Mr. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

Mr. G. BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Sir E. HARLAND, Bart., M.P.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.
Mr. E. TROW.

The Right Hon. Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH, Bart., M.P., and Mr. TOM MANN (Group B.), and the Right Hon. Sir J. E. GORST, Q.C., M.P., Mr. JAMES MAWDSLEY, and Mr. M. AUSTIN (Group C.) also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Joint Secretaries.

Mr. WILLIAM STEELE called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

2468. I believe you are the general secretary of the Northumberland and Durham Miners' Permanent Relief Fund Friendly Society?—Yes.

2469. What is the date of your Society's origin?—We commenced on the 7th June 1862, and the Society was registered in January 1863. It is the oldest, the largest, and the stock from which all the other permanent societies have sprung. I may say that there are nine miners' permanent funds in England and Wales, with an aggregate membership of 268,971. The membership of the Northumberland and Durham Society is 107,997. We have also 300 local agencies.

2470. What is the area over which your society's operations extend?—Northumberland, Durham, West Cumberland, and Cleveland.

2471. What are the classes of workmen that compose it?—Almost entirely iron and coal miners, or rather all men employed in and about mines, and consequently all underground men, mechanics, coke burners and all other men employed in and about the pits and mines.

2472. What are the circumstances out of which the Society originated?—It originated in consequence of the Burradon explosion and the Hartley calamity. At the Burradon explosion, 76 men were killed, and at the Hartley calamity 209. These were the two accidents that led to the formation of this Society. I may say that we had all the existing and the leading friendly societies established in the north of England at that time, but these societies did not make sufficient provision for all the liabilities arising out of pit accidents. For instance, none of them made adequate provision for the widows and the orphans that

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

were left, and most of them reduced a member's allowance at the end of 26 weeks. This Society proposed to take up those two points, first to make provision for the widows and orphans who were left through these big accidents, and also through single accidents, and to make an adequate provision for accidents the results of which extend over 26 weeks. At that time, as many of you know, this great accident at Hartley made a profound impression, not only upon the minds of north country miners, but on the whole national mind, and led to an appeal for public sympathy, which resulted in a large subscription of about 80,000*l*. Now the miners in the north of England at that time began to reason out this question, and saw that these big accidents always excited a large public sympathy, and that some kind of provision was made for the widows and orphans that were left, but that there was no provision for the widows and orphans that were left by the single accidents. There were about 200 single accidents in 1862 in the districts over which the Society extends, and between the Burradon explosion of 1860 and the Hartley calamity of 1862 there were about 400. These 400 accidents left about 261 widows and about 540 children. These were left neglected, or rather unknown, nobody knew anything about them but just their own friends, and perhaps the people in the district in which they lived. Now the miners said this, that these big accidents like Hartley make such a profound impression not only on our minds but on the national mind, because they caused 76 or 209 deaths, but it is just as necessary that we should provide for the widows and the orphans arising out of these single accidents.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

They further reasoned that in the 10 years ending 1862 there were about 2,000 deaths from single accidents, and consequently about 1,600 widows, and about 3,600 children, arose out of these accidents. Hence they saw the necessity of having not only a spasmodic but an organised and permanent provision. These are the considerations which led to the formation of this Society, and they show the necessity for its continued existence.

2473. I think while you are on the subject of the objects of the Society, you might exhaust that by stating what further objects the Society now covers. Two of the objects are, I believe, to make provision for the widows and orphans of members who are killed, and to make provision for members who suffer from non-fatal accidents?—Yes; I may say that the two general provisions now are to make provision for accidents in and about the mines.

2474. For both fatal and non-fatal?—Both fatal and non-fatal, and also a provision for aged miners. All our aged miners above 60 years of age who are permanently unfit to follow the employment have a certain allowance, say, 4*s.* a week, and we make a provision for all the widows that are left, and all the orphan children, and for all men who are permanently disabled. I might explain that a permanent accident with us means any accident which continues more than 26 weeks. The average duration of this kind of accidents is about 3½ years; in some cases a member may be off one year and in some cases 20 years, but the average duration is about three years and a half. Then, as I have said, there is the superannuation provision. Perhaps I might state here what the Society has been doing, how it has carried out these provisions, and what it is now doing. Since the commencement of the Society about 3,200 of our members have been killed. About 52,000 members have been at risk over that period, that is to say, the average membership over the whole period from 1862 to the present time is a little over 52,000, and that gives a rate of fatal accidents on the average number over the whole period of about 2·2. We have also paid to the widows and the dependent relatives of those 3,200 men who have been killed about 31,500*l.* for funeral legacies alone. It might be some use to say that the rate of fatal accidents over that period was varied. The rate of death per thousand between 1862 and 1867 was 3·83; the rate between 1867 and 1872 was 2·98; the rate between 1872 and 1877 was 1·96; the rate between 1877 and 1882 was 2·46; the rate between 1882 and 1886 was 2·0; the rate between 1886 and 1890 (including 1890) was 1·6. That represents the whole of the fatal accidents, and also the rate per thousand members. Now these 3,200 deaths have made 1,823 widows who have claimed, of course, from the Society, and these widows have brought 3,585 children. We have paid to those widows and children over that period 246,000*l.* Since the commencement of the Society 3,200 of our members have been

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

permanently disabled. Allow me again to say that a permanent accident means any accident whose duration is more than 26 weeks. As I have said, 3,200 of our members have been permanently disabled, and we have paid to these a sum of 132,242*l.* In 1870 we commenced what is called the minor accident department. At the commencement of the Society we only paid legacies and a weekly allowance to widows and children, and for permanent accidents, that is accidents that continued more than 26 weeks. Since that time we have made a provision for accidents from one to 26 weeks, and since 1870 we have paid about 750,000 weeks' relief to non-fatal accidents which continued from one to 26 weeks, and these have been paid to about 246,000 persons. Then there is the superannuation fund. In 1874 we commenced a superannuation fund. The object of this department, as I have said, was to give all our old men above 60 years of age, who are permanently unfit to work, a weekly allowance. Since 1874 about 5,757 of our aged members have applied for relief, and we have paid to these aged miners 244,339*l.* I may here say, it may give you some little statistical information on this subject of superannuation so far as we are concerned, that we pay to all the old men above 60 years of age who are incapable of further work.

2475. How much do you pay?—We pay now 4*s.* per week, or 10*l.* 8*s.* per year. About 2,000 of these old men have applied under 65 years of age, that is between 60 and 65, and 3,757 have applied who are over 65 years of age. We have paid to these 5,757 old men—I have noted it in years—about 24,000 years' relief. For the first three years we paid 16*l.* per annum to the old men, but we found that the revenues were incapable of paying that relief, and the allowance was then reduced to 3*s.* per week.

2476. With reference to the 24,000 years' relief, does it mean that at 10*l.* 8*s.* per annum you have given 244,339*l.*, that sum being equal to the 24,000 odd years?—Scarcely that, but that is the principle. We have had three classes of payments. We commenced to pay 16*l.* a year, not 10*l.* 8*s.*, and we paid that for the first three years; for the next four years we paid 7*l.* 16*s.*, or 3*s.* per week; the last few years we have paid 10*l.*, but altogether we have paid, as I have said, 24,000 years' relief, and that divided amongst the 5,757 old men is a little over four years each.

2477. Will you put in the rules of your fund?—Yes, I will do so with pleasure (*handing in print of rules*).

2478. These rules, dated 1891, will really afford information, I suppose, upon the amounts that you allow in the various cases which you deal with?—Yes, I may also put in the Society's last Annual Report, which contains very full tables of disbursements, receipts, and so on, and four tables showing the number of fatal accidents from 1862 to 1890 inclusive, and the amounts paid in respect thereof, the progress of the Society since its establishment as regards

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

2491. Has that affected seriously the financial position of the Society?—Yes, it has. Our last actuarial calculation was made at the end of 1886. As you know, we make a cash return to the chief registrar every 12 months, but every five years we have to make this quinquennial return. Now at the last return our liabilities exceeded our assets by 73,000*l.*, and I should say that since that time we have further increased our deficiency by 17,000*l.* I should therefore say at the present time our deficit is about 90,000*l.* The present position of the Society is as follows: The present accumulated capital is 142,495*l.*, of this amount 132,894*l.* belongs to the accident department, 9,601*l.* belongs to the superannuation department, and the present liabilities roundly, as I have said, are about 90,000*l.* We have now 1,008 widows on the Society, 1,269 children, and 590 members who are permanently disabled, and the future requirements of these recipients at the allowance stated of 5*s.* a week, 2*s.*, and so on, in all probability is 90,000*l.* more than the accumulated capital of the Society.

2492. What would the Society's position have been had all the owners subscribed 20 per cent. on their workmen's contributions from 1862 to 1890?—It would have been solvent, and had a surplus of 19,532*l.*; or had the owners only paid 12½ per cent. on their workmen's contributions up to December 1890 the Society would have had to record a deficiency only of 51,954*l.* Had the royalty owners subscribed 12½ per cent. on the members' contributions over the same period of 1862 to 1890, or 119,142*l.*, the present position of the Society would have been solvency and a surplus of 29,142*l.*

2493. Now, as regards the management of the Society, how is that conducted?—The Society is solely managed by its working members through the medium of an annual meeting, which is composed of representatives from the local agencies, by a board of management appointed by the annual meeting, and by local committees appointed by the members of and at each local agency. There are two sections of management, local and general. The general management consists of a staff of general officers and a board of management appointed at the annual meeting, as I have before stated. The local management consists of 300 local agencies, each having a committee of management appointed by their own members at their own local annual meetings. The cost of the general management is a little over 2,000*l.* per annum, which is paid to the general board of management, consisting of 12 persons, the general secretary and treasurer, two general agents, and four clerks; also towards the cost of printing, rents, medical examinations, &c. The local management costs about 5,800*l.* per annum, which is paid to 300 local secretaries, 300 local treasurers, 1,500 local committeemen, and about 1,200 overmen, cashiers, and other colliery officials who deduct the contributions off the wages of our members at the colliery office.

2494. What amount is paid to the local secretary, treasurer, and committeemen?—The local committeemen are paid 5*s.* per annum each. Up to 1890 the amount paid to the local secretary and treasurer was 3½*d.* in the £ on the members' contributions. I might say that a resolution was adopted at our last annual meeting which has altered this. The overmen instead of having 7*d.* in the £ are only to have 5*d.* in the £. We shall pay 1*s.* 2*d.* in the £ for deducting the contributions after this year; 9*d.* in the £ will be paid to the secretary and treasurer and 5*d.* in the £ will be paid to the overmen for deducting the contributions at the office.

2495. Do you know at all what the proportion paid to the colliery officials amounts to?—It amounts to about 2,450*l.* The total is 4,919*l.* and that divided by 2 gives about 2,450*l.* to the secretaries and treasurers and about 2,450*l.* to the overmen, cashiers, &c.

2496. Does this Society regard it as needful to pay this per-centage to the colliery officials for stopping the money off and handing it over to the local treasurer, for that, I suppose, is the service rendered?—It is. I can only say that if the money was not so deducted the Society would suffer a severe loss in its membership. I do not see why the owners ought not to deduct it free. We have a large experience on this point. We have found that wherever the contributions are taken at schoolrooms, public-houses, &c., the membership is considerably smaller. In the early periods of the Society's history the contributions were taken at schoolrooms, public-houses, and so forth, and we could never get the whole of the men into the Society. A few instances will show that. At Ryhope, where they employ about 1,600 men and boys, we could never get more than about 400 members; at Seaham, where they employ 2,000 men and boys, we could never get more than about 600; at Hetton, where they employ a larger number, over 2,000, we could never get more than about 550; but since the contributions were deducted at the colliery offices we have now 1,600 members at Ryhope, 2,000 at Seaham, and over 2,000 members at Hetton.

2497. I understand that the inference to be drawn from the statement you have just made is this, not that the stopping it off at the colliery office leads to influence being used by the colliery officials to induce the men to become members, but that the facility of contributing through a deduction made at the colliery office leads to men being willing to become members who would not take the trouble to go to a schoolroom or other appointed place to pay their money?—Yes, that is so. There is no compulsion, it is simply an easier method of taking the contributions. It is simply a method that prevents a man from forgetting to pay his contributions. Many men who were members of the Society in the earlier periods of its history when the moneys were taken at public-houses and so forth did not continue their membership, but allowed their membership to lapse in consequence of forgets, &c.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

pay smart money—all of them pay it. I should also say that the sum paid for the compensation is considerably less than the sum which the owners would have paid to us.

2516. It was just that which I wished to elicit, and therefore I asked you what the amount was?—The amount they offered to pay in 1881, if we had made an arrangement under the Employers' Liability Act, was 25 per cent. on their workmen's contributions. Now I find that the members since 1881 have subscribed about 672,000*l.* 25 per cent. on that would mean 168,000*l.* During that time the owners have paid 48,000*l.* Had this arrangement been made, therefore, they would have subscribed 168,000*l.*, but they have actually only paid under 48,000*l.*, or a difference of 120,000*l.*

2517. And you think that whatever the amount paid away in compensation may have been, certainly it does not amount to that sum?—No.

Mr. *Burt.*

2518. I think you said that in Northumberland the coal-owners subscribed little or nothing to the miners' permanent relief fund?—To the best of my recollection nothing.

2519. Did they subscribe before 1881?—Many of them. The Seaton Delaval Coal Company, the Cramlington Coal Company, the Ashington Coal Company. I do not know whether I am right in designating the companies, but all those used to subscribe to the Society and do not now subscribe.

2520. Many of them did not even prior to 1881; the great majority did not, I believe?—That is so, but I am not in a position to say which of the Northumberland owners did not pay. I know a great many of them did pay then who do not pay now.

2521. You were just asked as to the amount of compensation that was paid under the Employers' Liability Act, and you answered that it was not within your province, and, of course, you do not know?—No, I do not.

2522. I suppose that at the time prior to the passing of the Act, there was a dread that there would be a good deal of litigation, and that the owners put that forward as a plea for refusing to pay. You are not aware whether there has been litigation so far as Northumberland is concerned?—Officially, of course, I am not in a position to say: but to the best of my knowledge there has not been the same litigation as was anticipated.

2523. Would it surprise you at all to learn that there has not been a single case against an associated coal-owner under the Act?—Yes, I should be a little surprised at that; it all shows the necessity of and the great advantage that that arrangement would have been to this Society. If that arrangement had been made, instead of getting this 48,000*l.* from the owners, we would have got 168,000*l.*, or we would have got 120,000*l.* more than we have got. If there have been no cases of litigation in the courts of Northumberland—there may

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

have been two or three in Durham—that would go to show that if there has been anything paid it has been paid on individual arrangement, and I do not see a great deal of difference between the owners paying compensation to an individual without going into a court and paying it to this Society; in other words, I do not see a great deal of difference between paying a man individually and paying 10,000 men, the principle is the same; it is simply an arrangement under which they act in both cases.

2524. I do not want to ask you your opinion unfairly; I was going to say, neither fairly nor unfairly. I want to confine my questions mainly to eliciting facts; but with reference to the validity or otherwise of this plea or pretext as regards the Employers' Liability Act, would you not say, as a practical miner yourself, that, apart from any legal obligation imposed on the mine owner, mining is necessarily a very dangerous occupation, and that with every care and skill on the part of the managers and owners of collieries, every readinesss to expend money in the protection of life, and every care also on the part of the workmen, fatal accidents will happen in connexion with mines?—Yes, I think so.

2525. Then would not there be some moral obligation on people who are interested in mining and derive large incomes from it to subscribe to societies such as yours?—Yes, I think so. This is the way I look at that question. I should divide accidents into three classes for this purpose. First accidents, or, rather, I should say, injuries that are due to workmen's own neglect; second, injuries which are due to the neglect of the owner or his agent; and third, accidents due to neither party's neglect, but due to circumstances over which no persons have any control, or to unforeseen causes. Now I say that the owners in the last case ought to subscribe, that in spite of the Employers' Liability Act they ought to subscribe to that class of accidents, assuming the duty of the workman to make provision for accidents which are due to his own negligence by his own contributions, and assuming the right of the owner to subscribe to all accidents that are due to his neglect, and for which he is responsible by law. Assuming that duty, yet I say there is another class of accidents belonging to neither of those two classes, over which neither party have any control. There is another reason. The law only makes an owner responsible for accidents that are due to the negligence of himself and his agent that are proved in a law court. Now there is a margin between accidents which are really due to his neglect and his own fault and those which are due to the neglect of those above him. It is one thing for an accident to be due to the neglect of a certain person and another to prove it in the law courts, and I think in that margin the owners ought to contribute to a certain extent.

2526. Would not that obligation also apply, in your opinion, to royalty owners who in many cases derive very large incomes from minerals?—I think it specially applies to mineral owners, the

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

liability in one year. And so with the permanent disabled members. Therefore, in order to be solvent and to be on a sound economic basis, the contributions in each year must be equal, not to the liabilities paid in that year, but to the liabilities incurred in that year. Hence you want to be in a position in order to be safe to start, as it were, a new society at the end of each year.

2539. Has there been generally cordiality toward and co-operation on the part of the Miners' Trade Unions in the north with your Society?—The most harmonious relations have existed between the trade union agents and our Society. Without exception they have always been ready to promote the interests of the Society, never have thrown any difficulties in its progress. In any appeals to the House of Commons, and we have had one or two, for once or twice it has been necessary to make appeals here for alterations of the law, we have always met with the most useful and the most cordial support from the agents and from the labour candidates, not only from the North of England but from other districts.

2540. With regard to the amount paid to old men. You mentioned that at the beginning the amount was larger: what was it at the beginning per week?—6*s.* a week. We had no data. We were children to a certain extent. It was only a sort of rule of thumb calculation. We commenced stupidly to pay 1*d.* per fortnight, ½*d.* per week, and to give 6*s.* a week benefit. We soon found that we could not do that. At the end of three years it was necessary to reduce the benefit. We reduced it from 6*s.* to 3*s.* Then again in 1880 we raised the contributions, and the contributions of that department now are 3*d.* per fortnight, and the benefits 4*s.*

2541. I suppose you were compelled to reduce the amount from 6*s.*?—Yes. It was an absolute necessity. At the end of three years we found, not from an actuarial calculation, but from a school-boys' calculation, that our income was considerably less than our expenditure.

Mr. *Trow.*

2542. Did I understand you to say you have 3,200 disabled members?—Yes, I have given you the numbers roundly.

2543. How often is the money stopped in the office?—Once a fortnight: at one or two places once a month, and a few places, I believe in Cleveland, once a week.

2544. Do the clerks ask to be paid?—Yes, they ask to be paid. It is a sort of perpetual custom. It has been paid from the commencement. They expect to be paid, in fact, one or two even object to keep the money off for the 7*d.*

2545. Are you aware that for 22 years the subscriptions to the Board of Arbitration have been fortnightly stopped, and all the doctors' money in connection with all the iron and steel trades in the north of England, and not one penny piece is paid to the clerks from it for the trouble they take?—I was not aware of that. It is very good of them.

Sir *E. Harland.*

2546. You have referred to various stoppages, in the way of contributions to the Society being made at the office of the pit by the officials?—Yes.

2547. I presume that that must be from some special legislation applying to mining interests making an exception to the stipulations of the Truck Act passed some two or three years ago, which prohibited any stoppages of any kind being made off the workmen?—I think it did not do that. Mr. Broadhurst had two amendments to Mr. Bradlaugh's Bill, making it illegal to deduct either for accident or sick funds contributions by their workmen; but those amendments were not adopted.

2548. Are there any stoppages for goods purchased at stores supported or assisted by the employers?—No; that is ancient history with us now. We have nothing of that kind now. The co-operative store has changed that. A man goes to his store and purchases all his goods and pays his money.

2549. You referred to some proposal having been made with reference to contribution by the coal proprietors towards accidents under the Employers' Liability Act falling through, and that your Society has suffered considerably through the falling through of those negotiations?—Yes.

2550. Under what circumstances did the negotiations fall through? Was it that the proposal by the proprietors was not at the time considered as liberal as it should be, but afterwards found that it would have been more advantageous to the Society if it had been accepted?—No, it was not considered sufficiently liberal. It was rejected by the workmen, that must be distinctly understood, because the alternative was considered the greater of two evils. It was considered necessary that the employer should be under the influence of a personal sense of his own responsibility, and influence of that personal sense of responsibility would reduce the accidents.

2551. But it has worked out to your disadvantage?—Yes, as far as our Society is concerned. But, of course, although I am secretary of this Society, I cannot forget the fact, and I ought not to forget the fact, that it is possible, it may be probable, that the influence of the Employers' Liability Act is to reduce the rate of accidents, and by reducing the rate of accidents it would reduce our liabilities. For instance, the rate of fatal accidents with us up to 1885 was 2 per 1,000. The rate of fatal accidents since 1885 is 1·6 per 1,000. I do not say this is due to this: but that will make a considerable difference in the number of our deaths. For a round calculation, suppose it is 1·5 against 2. We have 100,000 members. Now 100,000 members at 1½ per 1,000, which is the rate of the last two years, would produce 150 deaths; but at a rate of 2 per 1,000, with 100,000 members, would produce 200 deaths, and therefore the difference between 1·5 and 2 on our Society would be 50 deaths less in the year. Every death costs us above 130*l.*; the saving therefore

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

to the Society on this reduction would be 50 times 130*l.*, which would be a saving of 6,500*l.*, assuming that it arises from that.

2552. Is it customary for those getting their goods at the co-operative stores to have a sort of recognised credit from pay to pay, or are they cash transactions on each purchase?—Cash transactions, except on the sly. There may be one or two cases, but it is contrary to the custom and the rules of the Society that any credit should be given. It may be given on the sly in one or two cases, but it is not the custom; the custom is cash payment.

2553. Do you find that the fortnightly pays are satisfactory?—They are satisfactory; fortnightly pays, as far as I know officially, are satisfactory.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

2554. With regard to the stoppages at the colliery office for your fund, are you aware that there is a provision in the Truck Act which enables that to be done by a man signing a paper asking for it?—Yes. The consent of the men to the office deductions has been secured in this way. In 1875–6 I attended, I should say, 200 Union meetings, not permanent fund meetings, but 200 meetings of the Union members, meetings at which Union business was done, and at the close of the business I addressed the men on the advantages of the Society, and on the necessity of all of them entering the fund. And at those 200 places resolutions were adopted that the money should be deducted at the colliery office, and strongly recommending all the men to be members of the Society. Now I believe that those meetings and those resolutions have done a great deal to extend the Society.

2555. You spoke also with regard to the royalty owners making a contribution, and you said that you think that if they do not do it voluntarily they ought to do it compulsorily; have you fixed in your mind how much that should be?—Personally, I certainly think they should contribute. As to the amount I think it would be to the advantage of the Society to accept the arrangement that has been made in North Wales, as a beginning at all events, 12½ per cent. on the workmen's contributions.

2556. Would you make any difference in the case where a royalty owner works his own mines?—No.

2557. Assume that he also pays a per centage?—I would not make any difference. I should say he ought to subscribe as an owner to begin with, and he ought to subscribe as a royalty owner afterwards. He holds a double capacity, he exercises a double function, and he ought to make a double payment.

2558. Are you aware that there was a meeting of what is called the Central Association for Permanent Relief Societies last month in London?—Yes, I was present.

2559. Was not the question prominently brought forward there as to the contribution by

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

the royalty owners?—Yes, a paper was read by Mr. N. R. Griffith, of North Wales.

2560. If I remember rightly, it was then announced that not only in North Wales, but I think in Lancashire, Colonel Blundell had already arranged to contribute?—Yes, he is a small contributor to the Society. He took the chair at that meeting. A paper was read at the meeting by Mr. Griffith, one of the colliery managers of North Wales.

2561. The question was brought forward at the meeting?—Yes.

2562. Failing to get contributions from the royalty owners and others, in view of your deficit of 90,000*l.*, would it not be necessary to re-arrange either the contributions or the benefits?—Yes; we ought to make an appeal to the members to increase the contributions or to reduce the benefits so as to bring down the liabilities to the existing assets of the Society. But I am glad that you have referred to this matter, because I should like to read a resolution which was adopted at the meeting to which I have referred. I refer to the meeting held at Chester some time ago, presided over by the Duke of Westminster, at which the royalty owners of North Wales agreed to subscribe 12½ per cent. of the workmen's contributions.

Mr. *Dale.*

2563. That was not the meeting that Mr. Hewlett asked about?—No, it was not; but this paper was read at the last conference and embodied in the transactions of that meeting. The resolution was moved by the Duke of Westminster:—"That this meeting of royalty "owners in North Wales is of opinion that the "proposal that they should contribute to the "Miners' Permanent Relief Society a sum equal "to one half the amount now subscribed by "the lessees is deserving of cordial support, "and recommends to the royalty owners that "they should carry it into effect unanimously, "a considerable proportion of them—representing one third of the coal-fields under operation—having already promised to do so, and "the maintenance in a sound financial position "of the Society being of great importance, not "only to the mining population, but also to the "community at large." Now that is an established fact so far as royalty owners contributions are concerned.

Sir *John Gorst.*

2564. Is your society a registered Friendly Society?—Oh, yes, since January 1863.

2565. And it complies with all the provisions of the Friendly Societies Act?—Yes, annual returns and quinquennial returns.

Mr. *Mawdsley.*

2566. As I understand you, you seem to make it a ground of complaint that colliery owners and royalty owners do not subscribe to this fund; am I right?—Yes.

2567. Do the colliery owners pay the market rate of wages?—I presume so.

Mr. *Mawdsley*—continued.

2568. Then what right have the men to any claim to a further subscription except as charity from the employers?—Well, put it on that ground.

2569. Would it not be much better if the men themselves paid the full amount rather than look to the charity of the employers to do it for them: would it not be more manly and more independent and straightforward?—No, I do not think so.

2570. Do not you think it would look better on the part of the men to pay the subscriptions rather than go sending round the hat to the employers?—The workmen are exposed to liability to accident causing injury and loss of life, which the law of supply and demand which regulates scientifically the amount of the wages, does not cover. It is one of those unknown quantities which the law of supply and demand does not cover, and therefore the market value of wages ought to be supplemented in the way I have stated.

2571. Taking a long period of years, is not there a moderately steady ratio of accidents per thousand men?—What period would you take?

2572. Take any period you like, 10, 15, or 20 years, or any lengthened period, is not the number of accidents in proportion to the number of men employed moderately steady, and therefore ascertainable?—I think there is a downward tendency.

2573. But still the proportion is ascertainable?—Yes.

2574. And if it is ascertainable, is not the amount required to meet those expenses ascertainable?—Yes.

Mr. *Mawdsley*—continued.

2575. Still do you think it is better for the men to send round the hat cadging to the employers rather than to stand up like men and pay their own subscriptions and insure themselves?—I do not say that.

2576. Is it not practically what you do say?—I say that while the liabilities can be ascertained over a good number of years, and while the contributions requisite can be ascertained, yet it does not logically or necessarily follow that I ought to admit that the workmen should pay the whole of this liability. There is no relation between the premises you lay down and the conclusion you draw.

2577. You say that the amount of money required to meet these liabilities in the way of accidents, fatal or otherwise, is ascertainable?—Yes.

2578. And do you say in effect and in practice that the proper thing to do is for the men to pay part of these liabilities, and to send round the hat to the employer for the workmen, although the employers pay the market rate of wages?—I will agree if you omit the word "hat." The difference between you and me, in my opinion, is this—I think that a portion of this liability should be legitimately borne by the owners. Therefore if they do not contribute they are not meeting a liability which they ought to meet. I say a portion of the liability ought to be borne by the mineral owners. If, therefore, the miners, who are only responsible for say five-sixths, pay the whole, then it is the mineral owners who are sending round the hat, because the workmen are paying the contribution they ought to pay, and therefore the question of sending round the hat is rather the other way.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. WILLIAM HENRY LAMBTON called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

2579. You are the secretary of the Durham County Colliery Enginemen's Mutual Aid Association?—I am.

2580. You are also the secretary of the National Federation of Colliery Engineers?—I am.

2581. And in the former capacity, as secretary to the Durham County Colliery Enginemen's Association you are a member of the Federation Board?—Yes.

2582. That Federation Board consists of miners, enginemen, cokemen, and mechanics—four branches—employed in the county of Durham?—That is so.

2583. The evidence you propose to give us has relation, therefore, to some extent to those three capacities in which you act?—Yes.

2584. Taking first your relationship as secretary to the Durham Colliery Enginemen's Association, about how many members have you in that body?—We have 1,633.

2585. Does that include almost all the men employed in that capacity in the county of Durham?—So far as we are able to ascertain there

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

are only 1,700 colliery engine men in the county of Durham.

2586. And you have 1,633 in membership?—Yes.

2587. The Durham County Enginemen's Association has answered the official questions addressed by this Commission to Trade Unions?—Yes.

2588. And you now hand in those answers?—I do.

2589. What are the wages paid?—The wages at present are standing at 5*s.* 0¾*d.*, 5*s.* 3½*d.*, and 6*s.* 1*d.* per day.

2590. What constitutes the difference between the 5*s.* and 5*s.* 3½*d.* and the 6*s.* 1*d.*?—The 6*s.* 1*d.* applies to underground engine men. The 5*s.* 3½*d.* applies to the winding men and pump and fan men. The 5*s.* applies to small engines, such as coal crushing engines, &c.

2591. Have you in addition free houses?—We have free houses and coal.

2592. Gardens?—In many instances gardens also.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

1889 the wages of all classes of colliery workmen in the county of Durham were regulated by sliding scales. The last scale that we had terminated in the year 1889. I suppose this Commission would desire to know the reason why it was terminated. So far as we, the enginemen particularly, as a section of that Board were concerned and were a party to arranging that scale, we believed that the basis rate of wages upon which that scale had to operate was too low. And furthermore we believed that the one and a quarter advance upon wages for every 2*d.* rise in the selling price of coal was less than we ought to have. A third, and probably not the least, reason why we desired to terminate that scale was because of our underground enginemen working longer hours than we thought they ought to work. While the scale continued we were not at liberty to deal with the hours questions in a general way. These are the reasons that we assigned for terminating the sliding scale, so far as we, as a section of the Federation Board, were concerned. Since then I may say that, as a section of that Board, we have drafted a scale which we have submitted to our members, that is the enginemen. No vote has been taken upon the subject, but we have sent them out to the various lodges to be examined and to be looked into by our members. We are desirous of having a sliding scale fixed again for the regulation of wages, inasmuch as, although the last scale was not at all satisfactory to us, I have no hesitation in saying that it steadied employment very much, and gave employment more regularly to the workmen generally. I am at liberty to give you the kind of thing we sent out. That is the last scale, and its working, and the proposed new scale, and also the *modus operandi* as to how the selling price of coal is obtained under the scale by the accountants (*papers handed in*).

2606. May I take it that the proposed scale on which you are inviting the opinion of your members and other enginemen does not differ in principle or in its general machinery from the scale that preceded it, but differs rather in the rate of wages that it assigns to particular prices?—The scale that we propose would be that $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. advance should take place upon every $1\frac{1}{2}$*d.* rise in the selling price of coal, and also to bring down the double leaps.

2607. I think we will not go into that in detail because all that we are concerned with now is the manner in which you and the men whom you represent look upon the system of regulating wages by sliding scale. As to that, I understand you to say that you at any rate look favourably upon it?—Clearly so.

2608. And may I take it that the branch of the Federation Board of which you are the secretary also looks favourably upon the system of regulating wages by a sliding scale?—They look very favourably upon it indeed. But the underground men's hours have not yet been brought down to that point that we desire them to be brought down to, and I believe that before we get our people to become a party to the

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

arrangement of another scale something would have to be done to reduce those men's hours of labour.

2609. What you desire in connexion with any re-establishment of a scale is, first, that the hours of the underground men should be reduced?—Yes.

2610. And, next, that the terms, as one may call them, of the scale should be somewhat modified in the interest of the wage receiver?—Clearly so; yes.

2611. Have you any other observation to make upon the joint committee?—I think I may say that the joint committee is a very useful committee, and has brought undoubtedly untold blessings to the workmen and also to the employers in the county of Durham. I do not say that it is a piece of perfect machinery. It is composed, as you know, of six gentlemen belonging to the Masters' Association and six of the workmen, and an independent chairman, who is a county court judge; and, generally speaking, I think that we as a section at any rate have not had much to complain of in the decisions arrived at, and in all cases I am quite sure that we carry them out loyally.

2612. Has there been any case of members of your Association refusing to carry out the decisions of the joint committee?—Not one.

2613. Or of any owner refusing to carry out the decision of the joint committee in relation to your men?—It is so slight that I should not care to say that there has been. It hardly amounted to that.

2614. Have you any observation to offer upon arbitrations as suggested in your letter?—We had local arbitrations, even while the sliding scale was running, as you know. There are certain disputes take place locally. Sometimes the chairman of the joint committee does not care to deal with the matter, and in that case a report is made. A joint report is made on each side, and if the parties that make this joint report cannot agree then they select an umpire, which constitutes a board of arbitration, which decides the question.

2615. In regard to hours, you state your wish to offer some observation upon the manner in which hours of labour can be best regulated?—So far as the hours are concerned, I may state at once that rather more than one third of our men have eight hours. As I have already stated, we obtained that reduction in 1872. At that time, when the eight hours was granted instead of 12, which had been going on for many many years, about as long as I have known anything about the coal trade, we did not suffer any reduction in wages, but we did forego $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. advance offered by the owners. This was something that was offered to us at the last minute, so to speak, and was a matter that we never contemplated. We took a personal vote of the whole of the members of our Association to know whether they would continue to work the 12 hours in the future as they had been doing in the past, or whether they would maintain their present wage and have an

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

2629. And that is the body to which you have just been referring?—Yes.

2630. Has that body acted unitedly in any important matter as yet?—No. They did about 12 years ago take some action in a portion of Staffordshire, but there has not been anything done since that by the National Federation in any other part of the country.

2631. We may take it it is a body formed with the object of enabling those engaged in similar employments in different parts of the country to unite in promoting the interests of the whole?—That is so. Here is a report setting forth the wages, the hours and conditions of labour in the whole of these districts if you care to see it. (*Report is handed in.*)

2632. As yet it has not taken any action in the direction of either promoting a strike or preventing a strike?—In the case of sundry strikes or disputes that had the appearance of leading up to strikes, certain action has been taken and strikes have been prevented, but there has no strike taken place of any note with the sanction of the Federation since one about 10 or 12 years ago, which took place in Staffordshire.

2633. Is there any other evidence that you would like to volunteer?—I do not think of any point just now.

2634. There is one point, I think, in connexion with the National Federation which you mentioned in your letter as to a conference held at Hanley, and the action which took place at that conference in regard to parliamentary limitation of the hours of work; what do you wish to say on that subject?—I can mention the fact that at the annual conference which was held on the 19th and 20th May last, the question of eight hours and the desirability of having it was discussed at very considerable length. Two proposals were brought before that conference; one was that while it was desirable to have the eight hours, it was desirable to have it by organised effort. The other one was that we should seek it by legal enactment. The matter was put to the vote, and 139, as you will find at the latter end of the report, voted for parliamentary enactment, while 138 voted that it should be obtained by organised effort.

2635. Was any action taken thereon?—No, there has not been any action at all.

2636. Was the voting regulated or measured by the number of members which each voter represented?—20 members have a vote. A delegate who represents 100 members would have five votes.

2637. Then when you speak of 139 and 138, that does not mean persons but votes?—Votes.

2638. Arrived at by that scale?—Yes.

2639. So that, in fact, one might multiply each of those 139 and 138 by 20, or nearly so?—Yes.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

2640. Your Association regards the hours at present worked by the underground enginemen in Durham as excessive?—Yes, we do.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

2641. I think you gave those hours as being from 10 to 11?—Yes. I may say this, that while 11 hours is stated to be the shift for underground workmen they work 12 hours in those cases that I have referred to, but they are paid for the twelfth hour at the rate of time and a half. So that still, really speaking, the men's time of labour has not been reduced, but what they have got practically is an increase of wages.

2642. Then they continue to work 12 hours, but one hour is counted over time, and for that they receive additional pay?—Yes.

2643. Is it necessary in working the mines that some of these underground men should be at work during the whole 24 hours?—Yes, it is very important.

2644. The work must be continuous?—It must be continuous.

2645. Then the only way really to reduce the hours would be to have three shifts instead of two?—That is what we propose ought to be done.

2646. Can you see any other way of reducing the hours?—We cannot.

2647. Supposing three shifts were adopted instead of two, and by that means the hours of work were reduced from 12 to 8, do you think that that change could be accomplished without a corresponding reduction in the wages?—I presume that in that case some reduction would have to take place in wages. I made reference to the winding men. When their hours were reduced no reduction of wages took place; but the wages were then standing at 4s. a day, and you could not conceive of men having a less wage to live on than 4s. a day.

2648. An opportunity was taken in that case of a general rise in wages, and this rise was foregone by the winding men who accepted instead a reduction of hours?—There was a rise offered to us until we had agitated for the eight hours and as we hoped were on the eve of getting it; and then an offer of an advance in wages if the men continued working was made by the owners.

2649. But as a matter of fact when the change was made you had the choice of either accepting an advance of wages or a reduction of hours?—Yes.

2650. Are you now waiting, in your efforts to reduce the hours from 12 to 8, until such time as there could be an advance in wages?—No. We have met the Owners' Committee on three or four occasions, and discussed with them the question of reducing these men's hours from 12 to 8. We have not succeeded yet.

2651. In these negotiations which you entered upon with the owners, have you offered to accept a lower wage on the understanding that there should be three shifts instead of two, and the hours reduced from 12 to 8?—We have not offered anything of the kind, because we have not heard anything like an offer from the owners that they are prepared to give us the eight hours. I suppose that the question would have to go on step by step by each party until

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

seven and eight hours per day. Some men are very much longer doing their work than others are. Taking my own experience, covering over ten years, I should think I should not average more than seven hours per day.

2729. And over what hours of the day do those seven extend?—Generally between 2 o'clock in the morning and dinner time. The men come to work at different times, according to the different class of work in which they are engaged. For instance, the drawers have to be out very early in the morning in order to have the ovens ready to receive the coals when the pit commences drawing at 6 o'clock in the morning. This, of course, necessitates their being out very early—about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. These same men may be able to finish their shift and get away home again by 9 or 10 o'clock in the day. Oftentimes we have men going home earlier than that. On the other hand, the fillers cannot commence work until the coke is drawn, and in many instances they do not commence work until 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning, and they sometimes have to wait on account of the service of trucks by the railway companies, and may have to be there till 2 or 3, or even later than that in the afternoon—sometimes they are done very early. The small runners again, for instance, are regular in their work—they begin when the pit begins drawing coal, and so do the levellers, and, of course, the sooner they get their work done the sooner they are at liberty to go home, as there is a certain amount of work to perform, generally speaking.

2730. At what hour in the afternoon would the latest of the class be able to go home?—Occasionally we have men who, through either breakage of machinery or a difficulty in obtaining coal, are detained even as late as 5 and 6 o'clock, and we have had them occasionally later than that, but we claim that it is a question of overtime after the pit ceases drawing coal for these two classes of men.

2731. Then apart from accidents, such as occasionally detain them to an unusual hour, what would be the latest hour at which they would go home?—Generally speaking, we should consider it very late if they were working after 2 or between 2 and 3 o'clock in the afternoon, that is, when there is a proper supply of coals.

2732. When does the week's work begin—on the Monday morning?—Very soon after the Sunday is terminated so far as applies to the drawers.

2733. Shortly after midnight on Sunday?—Yes; we have some Sunday work, but it is very limited in extent.

2734. Limited in the sense of there being few establishments that resort to it?—Yes; there are only two in the county, Messrs. Pease and the Bear Park Company, which have some Simoncorves, patent ovens, built which demand attention every day. In these instances, we have a certain number of men go out, and a number of ovens are just rammed out to keep the work going constantly on account of the bye-products which are got from the coke.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

2735. And is it owing to the class of oven?—Yes; it is owing to the class of oven, and the absolute necessity of their being constantly got out—that causes the Sunday work at those two places.

2736. At what time on Saturday would the week's work usually close—at the same time as on other days?—Generally earlier than on other days, as in many places they do not load as many ovens for Saturday as they do for ordinary days. It is very rare that the men are occupied after dinner time on Saturday. I might say, in correction, that you can scarcely call it Sunday work at Messrs. Pease's, Bankfoot, it is rather Saturday night and Monday morning work; they keep off the actual Sunday, though it is tantamount to the same thing.

2737. Have you any difficulty arising in connexion with discharges for belonging to a Trades Union?—Not so much as formerly, but we have had difficulties, and even recently. The only two strikes that we have had in connexion with our Association since it was formed have been on the account of men whom we considered to be sacrificed members, or men unjustly dealt with.

2738. Perhaps you can tell us when those took place?—One was the case of a member of our executive committee working under Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan, and Co. The man was discharged from his employment, and the men came out on strike on his behalf.

2739. What year was that in?—In 1889. It cost us between 500*l.* and 600*l.* over the one man being discharged. In the early part of last year some four men were discharged by Messrs. Straker and Love. The men considered that they were unjustly dealt with, and came out on their behalf. That cost us something like 710*l.* The question was settled by the Federation Board of which we are members.

2740. Your Association, of course, like the other three Associations which form the Federation Board, has a joint committee with the owners?—Yes; we work through a joint committee.

2741. Did the joint committee consider it came within their scope and power?—It was not a question that came within the province of the joint committee. These questions never come within the province of the action of the joint committee, but are really questions for the urgency committees between the Owners' Association and the Federation Board, and it was through the action of the Federation Board and the Owners' Committee, as an urgency committee, that the matter was eventually settled.

2742. Over what period did this last strike extend?—Five weeks and a few days.

2743. What number of men were out of work directly in consequence?—Directly we had about 230; indirectly more than 2,000 were idle for a considerable portion of the time.

2744. The remainder were?—Miners, mechanics, and enginemen.

2745. Whose produce could not find an outlet to the coke oven?—That is so.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

which is about to be made, you do not know that there is any improvement capable of being established?—I think not. There is one thing I might suggest, I think—of course it might be outside our province even to suggest such a thing—but I think there might be a great improvement made with regard to the relations between the employers and the employed if the Owners' Association gave individual owners more liberty to deal with us at home. We find a very great amount of difficulty from the fact that, however well the owners may be disposed when a local question arises, even if they are willing to meet us and settle the question, they are not allowed to do so without sanction from Newcastle. On the other hand, we do not tie our men, in fact, we never take up a question until the men have locally attempted to settle it themselves. When they fail, then we use our influence, and it comes before us as an Association. But we find that in many instances, in fact in the great majority of cases, the Owners' Association does not allow such a mode of settlement.

2758. Is that because, as a body, they would be apprehensive that concessions might be made at one place which would form a precedent for similar concessions being claimed at others?—I can only think that that is the real reason. I cannot conceive of any other; but I think it would be very much to the advantage of the working of the trade if questions could be disposed of locally.

2759. Would that lead to more prompt decisions and settlements being arrived at?—Yes, if it was so, and it would save a very great amount of cost and agitation, and, I believe, prevent a great deal of unpleasantness. We should not have so many cases either for the joint committee if we were allowed to settle them at home instead of taking them there.

2760. Does the joint committee fail to get through the cokemen's cases within a reasonable time?—We have not much to complain of. Pending the result of this arbitration we have had but one sitting of the joint committee during the present year; but in the previous years we never got through our cases in the one day's sitting, and consequently they had to be adjourned at, of course, doubled cost to both Associations.

2761. Would you expect, as the result of the award for which you are waiting, that the number of cases likely to arise in the future will be fewer?—I expect in the immediate future that they will increase; but that they will afterwards come down to a very much smaller proportion; that is my anticipation.

2762. But you think they would increase at first?—Naturally so.

2763. Do you mean because the award might be differently interpreted?—Not only that, but the system of work is so different in various collieries that it is quite likely, in bringing them in harmony with the award, that there will have to be changes made either by mutual consent or through the joint committee.

2764. Has any difficulty arisen through the

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

Unionists not being willing to work with Non-unionists?—Yes, we have had some little difficulty; not a great deal. As you know, from the numbers I have given, we have very few men indeed who are outside of our Association, and generally it has been a question of perhaps one man in the coke-yard. We often find them to be a class of men who are very unpleasant to deal with—men of, generally, very decided opinions. We naturally find as decided opinions on the other side. Our men have refused to work with them on many occasions, and we have on more than one occasion almost threatened to withdraw the Union men owing to the conduct of some of the other men. But generally speaking we have not a great deal of difficulty.

2765. May we take it that the agreement of your Association to submit the pending question to arbitration is an evidence that that mode of settling trade disputes is looked upon favourably?—I am afraid not, though we have accepted it. I think it rather proves the loyalty of the men to the two organisations. We asked them before we took a vote of the county to let the matter go to arbitration, and they refused. My own experience of the men at the present time is that arbitration is not so favourably received now as it was years ago.

2766. Can you account for that?—Scarcely, except that it is so slow in its process, and very often costly, and I cannot say that speaking from actual results of arbitrations the decisions have been such as have given confidence in the system to the men generally speaking. I have only been connected with two county arbitrations since I have been connected with the coke trade; one in 1877, and one in 1882. The decision of the umpire in 1877 has been by mutual consent reversed, and the decision in 1882 has practically led us into the difficulty of which I have complained with regard to not specifying a day's work when it did specifically fix a day's wage.

2767. Is there any material question of hours under the consideration of your Association?—No; we object entirely to any question of hours being entered into for the simple reason that as far as our trade is concerned it is an impossibility to fix a normal day of any number of hours. We have two classes of men, to which reference has been made, and of course we agree that though they can perform a day's work in very much less time than what we call pit hours, yet if they are unable to finish in that period of time, we do not claim that they are entitled to any overtime until after pit hours, that is 4 o'clock in the afternoon; from 6 o'clock in the morning till 4 in the afternoon, with one hour off for meals.

2768. The members of the Commission will, of course, presently draw out from you further information upon such points as they think you are capable of informing them upon, or they will desire you to make certain points clearer, but before that takes place, is there anything else that you would like to volunteer evidence upon?—I think not.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

2769. The average wage of the cokemen is fixed just as it is for the miners by the Federation Board and the Owners' Association, is it not?—Yes.

2770. Would you explain a little more in detail in what way the wage of the individual cokeman is determined?—The wage of the individual cokeman is determined by the amount of work that he does. Of course, nearly every coke-yard in the county varies in its character, that is, so far as perhaps doing a certain amount of work is concerned. Under what we may call ordinary circumstances an oven—speaking now of drawers, the principal class of men—is loaded with a certain amount of coals. We do not say to the owners, you shall only put a certain amount of coals in, but we do claim that for what they put in they shall pay a certain amount equivalent you might say to a ton rate on coal or coke. At the present time wages are paid at a price per oven except in one or two cases in the county of Durham, where the men are paid by the ton of coke drawn out. So that the system now in fixing a day's wage (or rather it is scarcely right to call it a day's wage, it is an oven wage) is that when a man draws one oven it is 1*s.* 6*d.* plus 35 per cent. at the present time, that is the county average.

2771. Just as the miner then is paid by the ton, so the cokeman is paid by the oven?—By the oven, that is, for drawers; by a certain number of ovens for the runners and levellers—by a certain amount of coke filled either by ton or by truck for the fillers—the number of trucks filled or the number of tons filled into the trucks as the case may be.

2772. I understood you to say that the amount of work was not fixed at the present time?—Not definitely fixed as to what should constitute a day's work.

2773. Do you mean by that, that it is not determined how many ovens constitute a day's work?—It is a generally understood thing between us that three 11-feet ovens are equivalent to a day. Drawing those is considered a day's work. But a variation is brought about in this way: perhaps some owners may choose to load their ovens with from 7 to 8 tons of coal. In another instance the average amount of coals put into the oven will only run from 5½ to 6 tons. Under the normal ruling it would appear that the man who is drawing ovens loaded with a greater quantity of coals would only get the same amount of money as a man drawing ovens loaded with a lesser quantity and that has been the cause of the reference which has just recently been decided.

2774. Then under this arbitration what has to be decided is how many tons go to a normal oven?—No, we do not wish to restrict the owners in any shape or form to the amount of coal that they should put into the individual oven. All we say is that there should be a certain number of tons of coal put into ovens which should constitute a day's work, or a certain number of tons of coke drawn from ovens

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

which should constitute a day's work for which there should be under ordinary circumstances a certain amount of remuneration fixed.

2775. In short, you wish to substitute a tonnage rate for an oven rate?—Yes, throughout, both on coal and on coke.

2776. In any given colliery I suppose the amount of work which each cokeman is expected to do during the day is the same?—Generally speaking, yes.

2777. But as soon as he has got through that work he may then go home?—Yes.

2778. And his labours for the day are at an end?—Yes.

2779. On the whole, you would regard between seven and eight hours as the average day's work for an average cokeman?—Yes; and further I should consider, from the arduous nature of the work and the great amount of heat the men have to contend with, that it is quite long enough for them to be exposed to the heat or to stand to work.

2780. When one workman is better than another the only advantage that he gets out of that is that he works shorter hours?—Yes.

2781. The regulations of the colliery do not permit that he should do more work and receive more pay, do they?—That has been one of the causes of the difficulties which have arisen between us and the owners in the past, but which will be put an end to, I think, by the present reference. The work is of such a nature that the whole of the amount of coke necessary for the coke-yard for the day in question must be got out whether the whole of the men are working or not; and so, when a man may lie idle from any cause whatever, the stronger men, to keep the coke-yard working, and to oblige the firm, and to get more money for themselves as well, do this work among them. We do not object to that being done; all we object to is it being considered a part of the normal day's work.

2782. You do not object to one cokeman, as a matter of fact, doing more work than another during the day?—He may do anything over and above his own.

2783. Provided it is counted as overtime?—Yes.

2784. Apart from the question of overtime, you prefer to keep the amount of work uniform, and allow the number of hours to be determined by the skill of the workman rather than that the hours should be uniform and that the amount of work done should vary?—We could not have uniform hours.

2785. You could not have uniform hours?—No, not under any form. We are bitterly opposed to any legislative interference with the hours of labour in any shape or form so far as cokemen are concerned. As far as our own trade is concerned it is an impossibility to fix any normal number of hours as a day's wage.

2786. Because the task has to be completed, whatever it may be?—Yes.

2787. And you cannot say definitely how long the task will take?—No.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

2788. The charge would be spoilt, I suppose, unless the process was carried on to the very end?—Yes, it would ruin the capitalists, and the workmen would never be able to do it because they would one day be preventing themselves from getting another day's work by leaving the work unfinished. If there were an eight-hour day fixed by an Act of Parliament, and a man when he has done his eight-hour day were to leave the ovens in such a state that the charge would be spoilt, that would mean a serious loss to the owner, and the man himself when he goes to that oven again at the proper time the next day would not have any work to do; and, therefore, that would be a serious difficulty.

Mr. *Burt.*

2789. I gather from the answer you have just given to Mr. Balfour that there is no difficulty among the cokemen on the question of the hours at the present time?—None whatever.

2790. When you said just now that you are opposed to any interference by Parliament with the hours, were you expressing the opinions of the cokemen as well as your own?—Yes, on a vote taken on the question.

2791. A while ago you expressed the opinion that it would be a great advantage if the managers had more power to settle disputes with the cokemen at the individual collieries and work places?—Yes.

2792. Have you a separate joint committee for dealing with cokemen's affairs?—Yes. Of course they change constantly. The same committee does not adjudicate upon cokemen's cases that does upon miners' cases, but under precisely similar rules though.

2793. I do not know whether you have had the opportunity of reading the evidence that has been given by some of the colliery owners before this Commission, but they also, I may say, expressed the same opinion as you, that is they expressed themselves in favour of local settlements. I gather from you that so far as your workmen are concerned they are hampered by the managers either not having the power or the will to settle locally?—That is so. I did not see the evidence in question, but I have found that difficulty to arise only within this very week. On Tuesday I had occasion to meet one of the partners of the firm of Messrs. Bell Brothers and their local managers, and they were perfectly willing to settle the question with me, but they could not as they had not received sanction from Newcastle to do so, and therefore, it has to lie in abeyance until we meet the owners upon what really might have been a question affecting only some eight or 10 men at the outside.

2794. I would like to ask your opinion as to whether, assuming that the unwillingness of the managers or of the owners to settle locally arises from a fear that it would greatly increase the number of applications to them, you think there is any foundation for that apprehension?—I think not.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

2795. You do not think that it is a well-grounded fear, if it exists?—No; I am confident that it would be rather the reverse. I might say that we have of course cases where the managers do this. I will mention one. The largest coke-yard except Bank Foot, I believe, in the county of Durham is Bear Park. We have never had a case before the joint committee for 12 years from that colliery, the manager settles everything.

2796. I presume there will be much less likelihood of friction going to the extent at least of causing a local strike if the matter is settled by mutual arrangement?—That is one of the chief reasons why I should like to see a change made in that direction. In the first instance the men themselves by a local deputation seek to redress the grievance, failing that I am called in, and the answer must wait till the ordinary course of the coming round of a joint committee. Their days are fixtures, you know; you cannot have a joint committee any day that you like; they are fixed for each three months separately. The men get irritated, and we have had stoppages of one or two days' duration more than once owing to this fact, that they could not get the question settled. Very often when it has gone before the joint committee it has been declared to be a question outside the province of that committee and the irritation has been increased, and we have had then to get the Federation Board to step in and to get an urgency committee of the owners and ourselves. I am glad to say that we have in all cases managed to settle the questions in dispute.

2797. When there is excessive delay, is the decision ever made retrospective?—If it is a question of wages, yes; that is so far as back money is concerned.

2798. When your men refuse to abide by a decision which may be given by a joint committee, do you and your committee take steps to try to induce them to conform to the decision?—Yes, and refuse to take up any question on their behalf until they comply with the rule.

2799. So that you do all you can to enforce the decision?—Certainly.

2800. I am not sure whether you said when your Society was formed?—In 1874.

2801. How many arbitrations have you had during that time, I mean general arbitrations?—Apart from the miners we have had four. The first arbitrations which took place after the formation of our Association were in every instance for reductions of wages. In 1875 there were two arbitrations, I believe (I am speaking from memory); we were included in the arbitrations affecting the miners. The umpire's award, at any rate, took a reduction off the cokemen without consulting them. In 1876 we were allowed a separate hearing in a case for reduction of wages. In 1877 we were called upon to show cause why we should not be considered unskilled workmen, and the umpire ruled against us and gave us a 6 per cent. reduction for it. That, of course, has been reversed by mutual consent since. In 1882 we had an arbitration for the

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

purpose of fixing work and wage; I do not know why, but the work dropped out of the question, and the wage was the only thing adjudicated upon, and that has brought about the difficulty which has brought the present arbitration into existence.

2802. Was that a question of a reduction of wage?—No, simply the fixing of an average wage.

2803. Have most of your arbitrations been in connexion with applications for reductions?—The whole of them, except the two last; I am only speaking of general arbitrations affecting the whole of the county. We have many local arbitrations affecting the question both for advances and reductions, and even change of practice. Local arbitrations are almost a matter of course. If the joint committee cannot agree the chairman generally orders a reference, then each side appoints arbitrators, and they settle with the concurrence of the joint committee.

2804. Do your men in all cases accept the award when made by general arbitrations?—I have never known but one exception, and that was at a very small place. I nave known one instance in which men refused to accept the award of an umpire. It was a question by which the joint committee had reduced the men's wages because they were doing an excessive amount of work. The men resisted the ruling of the joint committee, and the question came on, and a reference was ordered to be made to arbitration. The umpire gave them nearly the whole of the money back, but ordered them to go and do some more work, and the men refused to go and do it. That is the only case of the kind that I am acquainted with.

2805. When you spoke of the slowness of the process of arbitration making it somewhat unpopular with the workmen, you would not be meaning when it was a demand for a reduction of wage?—No, I am sure I would not. The present arbitration has engaged us ever since last December, generally speaking; the submission of the reference was made on the 16th January of this year, and we have not received the award yet. So that it evidently must be rather a lengthy process. It has taken no less than 22 meetings, I think, to bring the issue about. Of course, it has been a very large arbitration, the largest we ever had.

Mr. *Trow.*

2806. You stated that your men were in favour of sliding scales, but that the changes were not brought about quickly enough?—That was the reason given for the rejection of it, and I have no doubt, if the basis was improved and an offer was made to them, that the last decision in opposition to a sliding scale might be reversed.

2807. But I suppose that you like others believe that a scale gives stability to the trade?—Certainly. Personally I am in favour of such a method of arranging wages.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

2808. Do you think that the shorter the changes the more difficulty?—I do not know. The only difficulty would be with regard to ascertainments; there would be a continuous making of ascertainments. I do not know of any other difficulty that it would cause.

2809. You made a remark with regard to arbitration: you say it is not so favourable as it was years ago; was that a reference only to your own men?—Yes; I am only speaking on behalf of my own men with regard to that. If I did extend that opinion the answer would be precisely the same. Speaking of my own experience as a member of the County Federation, that seems to be the prevalent idea in the county.

2810. Can you assign any reason why it is less favourable?—Only what I have already assigned, that it has been too slow in its action, and that the results which have hitherto been given in all the large arbitrations have been scarcely satisfactory to the men in question.

2811. The men are not opposed to the principle but to the slowness?—I cannot say that they are generally speaking opposed to the principle of arbitration, because the whole of our interchange is the principle of arbitration. Whether it is by joint committee or in any other way—the principle of arbitration is involved in all these instances.

2812. You referred to a strike which after a time was referred to the urgency committee or the Federation Board, and by them was settled?—Yes, that is so.

2813. I am rather dull upon this point. You have an umpire appointed to sit upon the Federation Board?—No.

2814. Then the county court judge is president?—No, not of the Federation Board. The county court judge is the chairman of the joint committee. The Federation Board has no chairman, but generally when we meet the owners, one of the owners is selected as chairman; generally the chairman of the owners' committee.

2815. Was it the Federation Board or the joint committee which settled this case for you?—The Federation Board.

2816. Was that not a submission to arbitration?—I have already said that all our negotiations are an acceptance of the principle.

Mr. *Dale.*

2817. I am not sure whether there is not a little misunderstanding. When you said that the Federation Board settled it you mean, do you not, that the Federation Board, intervening as a negotiating body with the owners, arrived at an agreement?—Yes, that is so.

2818. Not that it was settled in the sense of being referred to the Federation Board to decide?—That is so.

Mr. *Trow.*

2819. There is not much difference, as I understand it—it was submitted to arbitration?—No, I beg your pardon.

2820. The principle is the same; your men struck, and failed to settle, and they referred the matter to a reasoning body?—The case in point was this, and this perhaps will clear the matter up. As I have already said, four men were discharged, the rest of the men at once gave in their notice; they did not even consult us, so that they broke through our own rules. Then the owners complained to the secretary of the Federation Board, who called a meeting, and we at once agreed a meeting should take place between the board and the owners' committee at Newcastle. They then—and you will see this is the principle of arbitration, I am sure—chose out from the board and the owners' committee one of each of the four sections, with myself in addition, as a member of our own executive, and an equal number of owners. We went to the collieries in dispute, took evidence on the spot, drafted an agreement, and the men resumed work. I suppose that is clearly the principle that you want to be at.

2821. Yes, you are working upon the principle of arbitration every month when you meet, and yet your men are opposed to it. You made a reference to the want of power on the part of the managers to effect settlements, and you answered Mr. Burt on that, but I want you to answer me on another point. If the men failed to settle with a manager and call upon you, as representing your Society, is it not reasonable to expect that the manager will then call upon his own Association or Association secretary to confer with you?—I have never objected to it.

2822. It is not because the manager would not wish to settle; but as the secretary of the men's Association is called in, he has to consider whether it is wise policy for him to settle without calling upon his own secretary to see what the result of the settlement will be outside?—Yes: but in the first instance, as I said before, we do not take up any case until the men have locally attempted to settle it, and it is then we complain of the action of the managers telling the men that they cannot settle it, that it must go further.

2823. Yes, it must then, if they cannot settle it themselves?—Or will not.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

2824. I do not think we have yet had the entrance fees and contributions: will you kindly state what they are, and also the benefits?—The entrance fee of our Association, which is purely a labour association and has no sick or any other benefit fund attached to it, is fixed by rule by the local lodge; each lodge fixes its own entrance fee, which is its own property, and has nothing whatever to do with the general fund of the Association.

Mr. *Burt.*

2825. It is kept at home?—It is kept at home for local purposes.

Mr. *Tom Mann.*

2826. And the contributions?—The contributions are 3½*d.* per week; 3*d.* being the contribution to the general fund and the halfpenny retained by each local lodge on account of its own local expenditure.

2827. And the benefits?—The benefits are for strikes, lock-out, breakage of machinery, and men unjustly dealt with, 10*s.* per week, for sacrificed men 15*s.*, with 1*s.* for every child under 16 years of age, and removal according to mileage when work is found.

2828. Do most of your members belong to the permanent relief fund?—We have very few of them indeed connected with the permanent relief fund. I only know of men in two coke-yards in the whole of the county connected with it.

2829. And there is no sick pay or superannuation from your Union?—No, the rules do not provide for anything of the kind.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

2830. Do your men subscribe to other benefit societies?—As they choose.

2831. Are there a considerable number who are members of other benefit societies?—The whole of them I should say, practically speaking almost every man is a member, and that is one of the reasons why we do not trouble about introducing sick benefits in connexion with the organisation because the great majority of the men are in one or more benefit societies already.

2832. So that although there are very few of them who subscribe to the permanent fund, yet the majority of them do subscribe to some benefit society or other?—I should say that 90 per cent. of our men are members of friendly societies.

Mr. *Dale.*

2833. Not connected with the special trade?—Not connected with the trade.

2834. Foresters, or whatever it may be?—Yes.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

lation of the average wage?—It was understood from our side.

2850. I think I have not made myself quite clear. Was the decision of the joint committee based upon an admission made by both sides that while the men were working overtime that overtime, instead of being kept out of the calculation of the average wage earned, was included in the calculation?—That is just the very thing that has led up to this arbitration. The owners said there was no datal work, and we held there was. That is the very thing that has led us up to this point.

2851. There was a dispute between the owners and the men as to whether overtime was or was not being worked?—Yes, that is so. I did not at first understand how the question was being put.

Mr. *Burt.*

2852. I suppose the point is this: that this work was done in this way, as Mr. Foster has explained, a man was off work and the work that fairly belonged to him was done among his fellows?—By somebody else.

Mr. *Burt.*—continued.

2853. And all that was included in the average wage put before the joint committee?—We will say there is a colliery with 50 men, 60 men, or 80 men, and there are perhaps 10 men off in that set. Now if there are 10 men off, divide that over the whole that would raise their average considerably. We say this extra work should be kept out of the average as this extra work is done by strong and able men, young men too, to oblige the owners in order to keep the ovens in proper working. That is why this is done, and it should be kept out of the average; an average should be an average.

2854. And the arbitration that is now pending is to clear up that point?—That is so.

2855. And to lay down a general principle?—That is so, at least we expect so.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Tuesday, the 27th October 1891, at 11.30.

Chairman—continued.

2870. Does that joint committee consist of equal numbers of masters and men?—Yes, it consists of equal numbers of representatives from the men and from the owners, with a chairman. Originally that was not so; it was equal numbers of each without an independent chairman.

2871. The information afforded by your Association in print in response to the Commission's questions is very full, and I do not think there will be any advantage in carrying you through it all. It would be merely causing you to repeat what your Association has sent in. The most convenient course would be to direct your evidence to the relationship between the employers of Northumberland and the men in their employment,—the questions of any strikes that may have arisen and the mode of dealing with them. Of course, when the questions do not draw out all the facts that you wish to lay before the Commission, you will interpose and offer to make what representations you like. Can you state how many strikes and lock-outs there have been in connexion with the Association from 1881 to 1890, and in the current year up to date?—We have only had one strike of any moment, and that was in the year 1887. We have occasionally had partial stoppages of a pit for a day or so, but very rarely. The relationship between the Owners' Association and the Workmen's Association has been friendly and satisfactory, with the exception of the strike in 1887.

2872. Do you desire to make any statement as to the cause of that dispute, the duration of it, and the issue of it?—Well, the cause of the dispute was that the then sliding scale was found to be unsatisfactory so far as the owners were concerned, and notice was given to terminate it at the end of 1886. Conferences took place between the owners and the workmen a couple of months, I think, before that, with a view to arrange another scale and also for a reduction of wages. The owners asked a reduction of 15 per cent. There were counter offers from the men, originating with 5 per cent., which was declined, of course, by the coalowners as not being sufficient. Various proposals were made from time to time. I can give you the details if required.

2873. No, I think it is not necessary.—Well, then, the result was that in the beginning of January we had to suspend our relationship with the Miners' Association, because they could not see their way to offer more than 10 per cent., and that was subject to ratification by the workmen; whereas the owners required 12½ per cent. When we came to a deadlock, notices were given and the work terminated on the 27th of January, and we did not resume work until the 27th of May.

2874. That is four months?—It was 17 weeks before work was resumed.

2875 And on what terms was the work then resumed as regards the reduction?—Upon the reduction sought for by the coalowners,—so far as the hewers were concerned, it was 12½ per cent.; stonemen and other persons whose wages were at and over 4*s.* per day were reduced 10 per cent.; people receiving wages between 3*s.* and 4*s.* per day were reduced 7½ per cent., and people receiving wages at and below 3*s.* per day were not reduced at all; and surface labour was reduced 5 per cent., with a sliding scale embodying those variations. There was rent of 1*s.* per week conceded to men not living in owners' houses.

2876. Prior to the suspension of work you describe, which lasted four months, had there been sliding scales regulating the wages in Northumberland?—Yes, the first sliding scale was established in 1879, which the workmen gave notice to terminate in 1882. An amended scale was begun in March 1883; that was the one which the owners terminated at the end of 1886. At the termination of the strike, commencing May 1887, a sliding scale was framed which was in operation up to the end of 1887. The workmen then gave notice to terminate it, and there has been no sliding scale since.

2877. You have had three sliding scales?—Yes.

2878. Of those three scales two of them preceded the strike of four months?—Yes, and two were terminated by the workmen and one by the owners.

2879. Since then you have had no general suspension of work?—No, none whatever; none since 1887. There has been scarcely any suspension of work, even at any colliery.

2880. Not even a local suspension?—We have had only two local stoppages, and they were very small in extent.

2881. How are you now regulating matters in Northumberland?—By mutual agreement between the two associations at their conferences.

2882. Does the price of coal enter largely into consideration in arranging wages now from time to time?—I think that is the main feature; it is the principal thing that guides the owners, and, so far as I can judge, the men also.

2883. The difference, then, between the system now prevailing and that which existed under the sliding scale is that under the sliding scale there was an agreed and recognised relationship of wages to ascertain prices. Now there is a discussion as to what wages should be in relation to the most recently ascertained prices?—We give the workmen the recently ascertained prices whenever they ask for them, and a discussion ensues upon that. That has always been the main feature in settling the rate of wages prevailing.

2884. How often does your joint committee meet?—Once every two months.

2885. Under whose presidency?—The present chairman is Mr. J. R. D. Lynn, the county coroner for South Northumberland.

2886. Is there any complaint that the decisions of the joint committee do not come promptly enough to meet the difficulties that have arisen?—We have no such complaint in Northumberland at all. I have a list here of the numbers

Chairman—continued.

of cases in connexion with the joint committee which I should like to hand in. (See *Appendix* 10.) I say the working of the joint committee has been most satisfactory to both owners and workmen.

2887. The statement you have handed in shows in each of the years from 1886 to 1890, inclusive, the number of meetings, which appear in the main to be six per annum. The number of cases are given, the claims of owners being distinguished from the claims of the men. Over those five years there were 80 claims by the owners, and the men's claims were 180, making a total of 260. Of these, 28 were sent to reference; 13 settled by agreement and confirmed; 64 decided by the committee; 10 ruled to be outside the jurisdiction of the joint committee; 29 withdrawn. Are these all cumulative?—Yes.

2888. Sixty-seven are moved off the board, and 18 are settled?—The total number of cases for the five years is 260. I have also taken out the number of cases for the five preceding years, and it is exactly the same, 260 for the five years.

2889. Curiously, it is exactly one a week?—Yes. The owners' cases in the first five years were 71, and 189 from the workmen; and last year there were 80 from the owners and 180 from the workmen.

2890. Is the chairman of your joint committee paid?—Yes, one-half by each Association.

2891. And he has, of course, a casting vote?—In case of an equal number of votes, the chairman gives his casting vote. He is not often called on to exercise that, not more than once in a meeting on the average.

2892. Is there any other point on which you would like to give evidence in chief before the members of the Commission ask you any questions?—On behalf of the Association I put in the earnings of the coal hewers for the years 1877 to 1890, showing the amount per annum, independent of the values they get in their houses and coals.

2893. The estimated earnings of hewers in the under-mentioned years from 1887 to 1890, inclusive. The estimated earnings in each year, omitting the shillings and pence, are as follows:—In 1877, 54*l.*; 1878, 53*l.*; 1879, 55*l.*; 1880, 56*l.*; 1881, 58*l.*; 1882, 61*l.*; 1883, 63*l.*; 1884, 60*l.*; 1885, 55*l.*; 1886, 54*l.*; 1887 (17 weeks' strike), 38*l.* Then the earnings in that year have been divided over the whole year, and not over the period of eight months during which work went on?—That is the money that the workmen were paid in that year.

2894. 1888, 53*l.*; 1889, 66*l.*; 1890, 80*l.*?—In the evidence given by Mr. Ralph Young, the miners' secretary, he gave the yearly earnings and we have taken them out ourselves as a sort of check, and the result is a very close corroboration of what Mr. Young stated.

2895. There is no substantial difference between you then?—Very little, excepting in the last year. I have also a paper showing the

Chairman—continued.

per-centage of the hewers lying idle from 1873 to 1890. That is the per-centage of men off work. It is a similar table to that put in in the case of Durham, showing that the per-centage of men off work is much more than it was three years ago.

2896. Have you any other statement you would like to make?—I beg to hand in a copy of the joint committee's rules (see *Appendix* 11) that govern the two Associations in their dealings with the local questions, and a copy of the proceedings of the joint committee for this year showing the nature of them. (See *Appendix* 12.)

2897. Is there any other point you would like to lay before us?—I do not think there is anything.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

2898. How many firms are there outside your Association in Northumberland?—I cannot answer that question.

2899. You only know those who are in your Association?—Yes, those that are subscribing members to our own Association. I can give you them, but I do not know the outsiders.

2900. But the annual tonnage outside your Association is over two million tons?—Yes.

2901. That must represent a considerable number of firms, I presume?—Yes; it represents those that are not in the Association; that number, nine millions, is taken from the Government returns, and the seven millions is taken from our own firms, and the inference is that the two millions must belong to the non-association owners.

2902. Have you found any difficulty in your negotiations with the men in consequence of the number of firms outside the Association?—No, we never had any difficulty at all in that matter.

2903. It was stated by Mr. Young that at the time of the great strike in 1887 the non-associated collieries continued working?—Yes, that was so; and the Northumberland coal-owners were quite willing that the firms owning the soft coal collieries should continue working on certain conditions, but it was not accepted. We have in the Northumberland Association the soft coal and he hard coal collieries. There was a resolution passed that the soft coal collieries should continue working if the men were willing to work, subject to their acquiescing in a proportionate reduction whenever the dispute at the hard coal collieries was settled, but that was not accepted.

2904. Are there no hard coal owners belonging to the non-associated firms?—No; all the steam coal are the hard coal collieries, and they are in the Association.

2905. Have you formed any estimate of the loss to the coal owners owing to that strike in 1887?—It is not given in the printed replies. The Association, as an Association, has not formed any estimate. The principle we went on was that each Association should bear its own loss, and we never inquired as to the total loss of the

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

coalowners. I, myself, have made an estimate of what that loss was to the coalowners, and also what was the loss in wages.

Lord *Hartington.*

2906. You said each Association bears its own loss?—I meant each member of the Association.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

2907. Have you any objection to giving us your estimate?—None whatever. I think that the loss in money for what I might call non-productive working,—that is, money paid for wages for the keep of ponies, for pumping water, for ventilation, or for fuel, and things of that description, during the strike would be about 55,000*l.*

2908. There would not have been much profit from working the collieries at that time?—I know little about the profit of collieries. It does not come under my charge. My estimate of the loss in wages to the workpeople would be 250,000*l.*; that is to say, money that would have been paid in the 17 weeks in the shape of wages that was not paid.

2909. The men were eventually compelled to accept worse terms than those which they refused two weeks after the strike began, I understand?—That is scarcely the right way to put it. Mr. Morley, at the request of the Mayor of Newcastle, had an informal interview with the Coalowners' Strike Committee, and he sought to ascertain from them the minimum amount that they would be disposed to re-open their pits for, and I think he was given to understand that if the Miners' Association came with a firm proposal of 10 per cent. and agreed for that to be incorporated in a sliding scale, the Owners' Committee were disposed to recommend their Association to close with them, and to give the workmen 1*s.* per week rent in accordance with the rent resolution of February 1883. Mr. Morley, I believe, embodied that in a letter, and a vote was taken by Mr. Burt and his colleagues, who sent that proposal out to the workmen, and it was rejected by, I think, 8,000 votes against, with 2,000 votes in its favour.

2910. Ultimately the strike was settled on less favourable terms to the men?—Yes, to the extent of 2½ per cent. The 10 per cent. was made into 12½ per cent.

2911. The workmen made a mistake in rejecting that offer then?—Yes, at that time.

2912. Is it not true that the Wage Committee of the men, in the first instance, offered to advise the men to accept a reduction of 10 per cent.?—Yes, they offered to the coalowners to accept a 10 per cent. reduction, subject to their members ratifying that. But that was not considered sufficient at that time; we wanted 12½ per cent.

2913. So that in the course of the dispute mistakes were made on both sides?—We had a very strong feeling in our minds that the representatives of the men would not be able

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

to carry the men with them, and that is why we felt justified in declining.

2914. Would it not have been worth while to have tried the experiment?—The feeling was running very high in the county at that time, and we were as good judges as the miners' representatives on that point. Another thing that the Workmen's Wage Committee did, was that they omitted in their final offer all reference to the question of house rent. They left that out "for the present," as they said, and that savoured of a threat.

2915. You were suspicious?—Yes; there was a sort of suspicion, I am speaking on my own behalf, that they would bring this up at another time because they had always put the house rent in the forefront in all their negotiations, and it was not in the last proposal of the men at all.

2916. Mr. Young expressed an opinion that the whole dispute might have been avoided if the masters had been open with the men and explained more fully what the situation was, and that it was impossible to pay the existing rates. Do you agree with that opinion?—No, I do not; because if the men would not believe their own trusted leaders, they would not believe the masters. I, myself, was living amongst them all the time. There was every opportunity if the men had wished to have any conference or conversation with me.

2917. There was a strike in 1877?—There was.

2918. And on that occasion the men offered to submit the dispute to arbitration?—Yes.

2919. And the arbitration was declined by the masters?—Yes. We had recently had an arbitration in the same year and we had not sustained the demand for the 15 per cent., and we were very much disappointed at the result of that arbitration, and things were so severe at that time that it was not a question any longer for arbitration, and we declined it.

2920. In 1887, arbitration was not offered, but Mr. Young said that it was known that it would be refused if offered?—I think Mr. Young's inference probably would be correct. I have been looking at the minutes, and I do not see any mention of arbitration until April. Mr. Burt asked for arbitration in the month of April, and that was declined by the coalowners.

2921. When arbitration was refused in 1877, was there any objection to the principle of arbitration?—I think the refusal to arbitrate arose from this, that we had so recently tried it, and it had been a failure, and we had not got what we expected to get. That was it more than anything else I think.

2922. Should you have a distrust of arbitration under similar circumstances again?—It entirely depends on what principle the arbitration proceeds upon. Our own necessities, I think, compelled us to refuse the arbitration in 1877.

2923. Would you put it in this way, that when the price gives no profit on the cost of production, the masters have their backs against the wall, and no matter what the decision of the

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

arbitrator may be they will be obliged to close their works unless the reduction is granted?—That is the feeling on the part of the owners when it gets nearly to that point. The arbitrator might call upon them to pay that which the owners themselves know is quite impossible for them to pay; and they decline to be put in that position.

2924. Do you think that the position of the masters is in some respects different from that of the men when the cost of production and the selling price are the same; that is to say, when there are no profits?—It is for the masters to try to get relief if they are to go on at all.

2925. If the men found that the masters would have to close the pits unless the reduction was effected, would not they be prepared to accept the reduction?—But the difficulty is to get the men to believe that.

2926. I think you do not quite catch my point. I am speaking of the unwillingness of the employers to accept arbitration; and I ask you whether, when no profits are being made, the employers are not in a different position, as regards arbitration, from that of the men?—I hardly follow you.

2926*a*. I will try to make my meaning clearer; where the masters feel that they would be compelled to close their works unless a certain reduction of wages was effected, then their line of action is determined, no matter what the decision of the arbitrator might be; if in their favour, well and good; but if against them, they would be obliged to take steps which would render the arbitration of none effect; I desire to know whether that would be your idea of the view of the masters?—I think when it is a question between closing the pits and a reduction of wages, the only thing is for the owners to get the reduction—as they did in 1877, and again in 1887.

2927. You spoke of much depending upon the principles upon which the arbitration proceeded. Can you, in the case of an ultimate question of wages, fix any principles of arbitration?—Nothing, excepting one's necessities.

2928. Can you lay down any principle for the arbitrator?—I fancy not. The arbitrator is sole judge of whatever he may do. He is not bound by any principle that you lay down. Each person states his case from his own point of view, and tries to establish that as well as he can. The umpire is only a human being, and he takes one particular view, and that may be seriously against the masters on a matter of vital importance. That decision of an umpire might not be so serious if it was not that you are standing with your backs against the wall; you might think of some alteration, but you cannot rectify that mistake.

2929. Would you consider the re-establishment of a sliding scale desirable?—Yes; highly desirable.

2930. Have the masters made any endeavours to re-establish a sliding scale?—Yes, from time to time

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

2931. Have they done so since 1887?—Yes. We have offered to establish a sliding scale with the workmen, which has been declined. In our conference from time to time it has been frequently mentioned, but the miners have a distrust of the sliding scale at the present time. Quite recently there has been a proposal to have a Wages Board somewhat in the form shadowed by Mr. Young, when he gave evidence before this Commission. Meetings have been held between the masters and the men, and they are still going on. I hope ultimately that we shall be able to arrange something of the sort.

2932. What Mr. Young shadowed forth in his evidence was a proposal for a standing committee, to which the subject of wages should be referred?—That was so, and that has been already put forward by the Miners' Association, and in part accepted by the owners.

2933. Do you think that that is likely to be a step towards the establishment of a sliding scale?—I think so, to arrange the terms and principles on which this Board should act.

2934. And you think it would lead eventually to the adoption of a sliding scale?—You need not call it a sliding scale, but that would be practically its effect; certain principles would be laid down by the Wages Board to guide them as prices rose and fell.

2935. So that in effect would be a sliding scale, though without hard-and-fast rules. The rules would be unwritten rules?—Yes, unwritten rules; but there would be an understanding as to how the fluctuations were to take place. There would be a margin for some other cost than simply the selling price. But that is shadowed out in Mr. Young's proposal, and we ourselves, have just agreed to the general principle of its being desirable to have a Wages Board.

2936. Do you also agree with Mr. Young's suggestion that it is desirable to have an umpire attached to such a board?—The Association have not agreed to that.

2937. They have declined it?—They do not see their way to it.

2938. On what ground?—Simply that they object to an umpire being called in—at all events to a fixed umpire. Circumstances might arise which might necessitate our going to an umpire; but to begin with, we do not think it necessary. On that point I might say that when we began this Joint Committee, which has been alluded to, we went on for five years without having an independent chairman. Eventually we had to go to an independent chairman, I admit.

2939. You would rather try the experiment of a committee without an umpire?—That is the feeling of the Association so recently as on Saturday last.

2940. With reference to the hours of labour of the boys, would the employers be willing to concede shorter hours of labour to the boys

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

if they could see their way to it?—I think they would if they could see their way to it.

2941. Do you agree with the objections to any alteration of the present system which were laid before the Commission by Mr. Young?—I agree with them entirely. It is not practicable to alter their hours at present.

2942. Would you be opposed to any legislative interference with the hours of labour?—The Association desire no legislative interference at all. They think that the workmen are able and willing to meet the circumstances from time to time as they arise.

2943. There is one other question I wish to put. A statement was made by Mr. Young that between the years 1874 and 1879 the effect of the strong organisation which the Northumberland miners then possessed was to disorganise trade. Would you agree in that view?—Not to the same extent that he goes.

2944. Another cause was operating at that time, to which he has also called attention, and which would affect his conclusion, namely, the difference in the hours worked?—He based that partly on the difference in the tonnage per man. I think in his evidence he speaks of the difference as being 15 per cent. difference in the time worked by the hewers.

2945. He based it on the output in Northumberland, as compared with other districts?—Yes, I think he alludes to it there, as being 15 per cent. I have the papers somewhere.

2946. It was a decrease of 14 per cent?—I think the difference in the working hours during that time was about 22 per cent instead of 14, and that would affect probably his answers to that extent. The hours of the men were lengthened, and I think what he has omitted to take into account is that the number of days per fortnight was also increased from 10 to 11, and that makes the difference between his 14 per cent. and the 22 or 23 per cent.

2947. Then your conclusion would be that the strength of the organisation was not answerable for the disorganisation of trade that took place at that time?—Only partially; I think possibly one of the causes was that the owners—their expenses being very great—were very reluctant to lower the price of coal. I think probably if they had followed the market a little closer they would have had more sale for coal. On the one hand we had the workmen unwilling to accept any reduction, and the high cost of everything caused the owners to wish to maintain their prices unduly long; I think that also operated partly upon the lesser quantity of those years—the two things put together.

2948. Disputes would be more likely to occur when prices are falling than when trade is going up?—Men are always most reluctant to come down. They accept advances without any trouble, and quite willingly, and the advance is put on more readily than we can get the

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

reductions off. The men are most reluctant to allow of any reductions.

2949. And the stronger their organisation the greater their reluctance?—Yes. I think that follows.

2950. Mr. Young went so far as to say that if similar circumstances were to occur now, he doubts whether a strike could be averted unless something like a sliding scale were in operation at the time?—Well, I hope that we will not have a strike. I would dislike to see it extremely.

2951. But would you regard that as an additional reason for establishing a sliding scale, or something to take its place?—Yes, I think nothing could be better than a sliding scale—for this reason. The advances are easier for the owners to pay, being more gradual, and the reductions are less irksome to the workmen, being also less in extent. I think what caused the irritation in 1887, was probably the demand of 12½ per cent. If the coal owners had got that off by degrees, I do not think there would have been the same amount of irritation felt—it being spread over two or three years—as there was when there was a sudden demand for 12½ per cent. That is where I think a sliding scale is beneficial to both parties.

2952. And, therefore, as the present period of prosperity cannot be expected to continue for ever, you could attach considerable importance to the negotiations now going on for an improved method of settling wages?—I think it is highly desirable that we should have something of that kind established—to prevent friction and to prevent any unpleasantness between the Associations.

Mr. *Burt.*

2953. You mentioned two short stoppages since 1877—they were not general?—No, just one colliery was stopped, I think, about four days—a small colliery, and at another one, a section of the workmen—the putter boys, in fact neglected the working of the colliery, and it was off one day, and a partial loss another four days; but I would scarcely like to dignify either of them with the name of a strike.

2954. Neither of them was in resistance of the decision of the Joint Committee?—The latter one was a sort of repudiation of the Joint Committee's action. I mean to say the boys asked for more wages and were unwilling to submit their case to the Joint Committee. That accounts for the latter case. The other case, where the pit was off three or four days, was in opposition to the agreement come to between the Owners' Association and the Miners' Association, shortening the hours of the boys, and at the same time making some small change in their wages. The boys wanted to have the same money for the lessened hours; hence the bother.

2955. You consider that that was a comparatively insignificant matter, and I think you have

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

said that the general relationship between the two associations has been very satisfactory?—That is so—very satisfactory and very friendly on general questions.

2956. Then, coming to the general strike of 1887; I do not want to labour it at all any further than it may perhaps teach us some lessons for the future. With regard to that strike I think you have said, in answer to Mr. Balfour, that the representatives of the men offered 5 per cent., and then ultimately they promised to recommend the men to accept 10 per cent. Now this offer of 5 per cent. was before the notices were given in at all?—Oh, yes; that was some time in November.

2957. That was very early in the negotiations?—I think it was in November.

2958. And the offer of 10 per cent. also was during the pending of the notices, but before the pits were stopped?—Yes, it was on January 8th. It was before the notices were given to the workmen. The notices were not given to the workmen till the 13th.

2959. The offer was made before the notices were served?—Yes.

2960. Notice of the 10 per cent.?—Yes, it was given on the 8th January.

2961. And your recollection of that offer is that the representatives of the men promised that they would recommend the men to accept it?—Yes; it was subject to the men ratifying that. It was clear that was so.

2962. You are quite clear upon that?—I am quite clear.

2963. My own memory was that the representatives of the men were prepared to accept the responsibility, and to go to the men and advise them to accept it—that is, they would provisionally accept it and they would face the men and advise them to accept it. You have said, and it is perfectly true, that feeling at the time ran very high, and it would have been a stiff undertaking, but the representatives of the men, according to my recollection, were prepared to face it.

Chairman.

2964. Is there any real difference between you and Mr. Burt?—Not much, but my recollection of the matter is that it was subject to its being ratified by the men, and we thought ourselves that the men would never accept it. After that meeting the coal owners were waiting, and we went from one room to another and reported the result of our last interview, and the unsatisfactory nature of it from our point of view; and it was then that the owners came to authorise the managers to give the notices in five days time, as soon as they could get them printed.

Mr. *Burt.*

2965. I will put it to you in another form. Do you remember a case in which the representatives of the workmen have agreed to recommend a particular course to the men, and the men have over-ridden their recommendation?—No. I have no recollection of anything of that kind. You should know better than I, but I have no recollection of any case of that kind.

2966. Judging by what has taken place before, it may be fairly assumed that the men would accede to an agreement come to that was recommended by their representatives?—Under ordinary circumstances they might do so. But this was a very special case, and we knew very well from outside feeling pretty plainly that things had got to such a pass that the men had bolted from under their executive at that time, or we had the impression that they were not subject to the guidance of their executive. We certainly thought at the moment that that was so.

2967. With regard to the question of recommending you have already said very frankly and fairly that the owners were in a similar position. They would not agree beforehand absolutely to a particular course, and I think you mentioned that in the interview Mr. Morley had with the owners, their proposal was to recommend a given course to their principals?—That was so. We had not full powers. There are occasions when both associations give their members full powers to settle. If the Miners' Association had given their representatives on January 8th full powers to settle, I am quite sure our association would have given us equal powers, and possibly we might have come to an agreement. The fault, I think, on January 8th, if it is to be called a fault, was that the Miners' Association did not trust their own people with full powers to settle, and I think in the ballot that was put out after Mr. Morley's interview, that was one of the things that was sought for—that the Miners' Executive should have full power to settle, and they did not get that.

2968. Now would you not say, as one who has had a good deal of experience, that there is a considerable difference, even in times of excitement, between negotiations going on pending the giving of the notices, and after the notices have been given, and the gear has come to bank, if I may put it in that vernacular. In other words, is there not much more difficulty in getting men to go in again after they have once come out, than to induce them to remain in before they come out?—I quite agree. It is always a bad sign when the gear comes to bank and the ponies are drawn.

2969. And do you still think, notwithstanding the offer of the 10 per cent., at that particular time it would not have been accepted by them even on the recommendation of the delegates of the men?—Yes; I think that was our opinion, that the men would not ratify the proposal that you were then making us.

2970. Would it not have been worth risking it?—There was plenty of opportunity to have got the power to settle between that and the notice terminating.

2971. There was still the chance of giving the notices if that had failed?—Yes, the notices

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

were necessary to bring the thing up to an issue. We had been going on for two months and a half negotiating and getting very little nearer.

2972. With reference to the suggestion of Mr. Young, that it would have perhaps obviated the strike if the managers and owners had met the men locally at the colliery, and if there had been a frank interchange of opinion and such like, a rather novel idea, but perhaps none the less worth considering on that account, and that then a strike might have been obviated. You do not agree with that?—I do not agree in that.

2973. You said that if the men would not accept the advice of their own entrusted leaders they would be less likely to listen to the managers of the colliery?—Yes; they would think we had some interest—some *arrière pensée*—in anything we said to them. They would look with distrust on anything we might have said at that time.

2974. Would it not have been possible to have given the men some evidence that their own representatives could not possibly give?—I think if they would not take the advice of their own representatives they would not take any advice from us; and I think their own representatives had every evidence that we could give them. In our discussions everything was gone into fully and frankly with the representatives from the Miners' Association, and they put it, I have no doubt, very fairly to their own people; but their own people would not have it.

2975. You think that the managers would not have been able to give more convincing facts relating, for instance, to their losses or to their not receiving profit, than the leaders of the men or the representatives of the men could have given?—I do not think that they would have heeded anything that the managers had said after the gear was brought to bank. They repudiated their own leaders, and I am quite sure that they would regard with jealousy and distrust anything that we put before them. Anything that we might have said would not, I think, have done any good.

2976. It was before the gear came to bank that these interviews might have taken place. I quite agree with you, if I may say so, that it would have been no use afterwards?—We do not, as a rule, have any direct dealings with the workmen. Our negotiations are entirely carried on between the one association and the other through its accredited representatives; and it would have been quite a novel course of procedure to go behind the backs of those representatives.

Chairman.

2977. You are not reproached with not having done it; you are merely asked your opinion as to what would have been the effect if that had been resorted to?—If it had been resorted to I do not think it would have any effect on the matter.

Mr. *Burt.*

2978. The question is based on this, if I may explain it. It is based on the assumption that in the case of the representatives of the men, it is a matter of faith and trust entirely, but that the owners themselves could give demonstration almost—they would be able to give proof that the case was one that demanded some considerable concession; you do not agree with that distinction at all?—No; I think if they would not take it from the lips of their own advisers, they would not take it from the lips of the managers.

2979. I think you said the men were very unwilling to come down. You would not restrict, I presume, that unwillingness to descend to the Northunberland men?—I think it is very natural.

2980. Are they less unwilling than coal owners to come down?—We try to keep up the prices as long as we can, because it is for the interest of the men as well as the owners that we should do so. But still circumstances are too strong for us—we have to follow the market

2981. In my question I was referring to profits rather than prices. When profits come down it is not a very agreeable process?—I do not think it is.

2982. You were asked several questions by Mr. Balfour as to boys. I think you are aware that there is a strong and a very natural feeling in Northumberland in favour of shortening the hours of the boys—to reduce them to eight, and I think you have said you agreed that would be a desirable thing if it could be accomplished?—Yes.

2983. Have you ever considered the proposal that has been made in favour of three shifts of men and two shifts of boys?—Yes.

2984. If so do you think that would be a solution of the difficulty?—No, I do not think it would. We have considered the various proposals. We have seen the report that was made by the Miners' Association, and we have read and considered that amongst ourselves, and we quite agree that it is impracticable to work our mines in Northumberland upon any other than the present system, and that the three shifts of men and two shifts of boys is not a feasible system for that part of the country.

2985. It has been said that the coal owners would not object strongly to a scheme of that kind; but you do not assent to that at all as representing them?—Certainly not. We say it is not practicable. We do not say it is not possible, because, I suppose everything is possible, but it is impracticable, as far as our mines are concerned, looking at it from every point of view as far as we can see.

2986. Would you object to state some of the difficulties?—With three shifts of coal hewers we could not get the stone men in to do the work required in the time. In Northumberland our seams are getting very thin and very low, and for almost every two hewers we have to have one stone man, and we could not get the stone work done in the eight hours. We find that

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

now, with two shifts of hewers, it takes us very often all our time to follow the two shifts, and therefore if we had three shifts of men in, and those men were working something like six hours at the face, there is 18 hours at the face, and there would be only six hours for the men to shoot the top and bottom stone, which would not be enough. We would have to multiply the number of the stone men very much, and then these men would have only six hours to do their work in instead of eight. That is one of the strong objections. Not only that, but the hewers would get forward in front of the stone "canches," and it would be extremely awkward for them to work and fill their coals. There would be a further difficulty in getting boys. We have not boys enough now to follow the ordinary one shift. If we had to have two shifts of boys the difficulty of finding the boys would be still greater. There would never be time to put the pit right or to allow the pit to cool.

2987. With regard to the difficulty of getting boys, would you say that that is general, or does it apply only to a few of the collieries?—It is over the whole county. There is a difficulty in getting boys sufficient at the present time. I am speaking of boys under 16. The Mines Regulation Act limits those boys' hours to 54. Well, our boys work 10 hours under 16 years of age. Therefore many of them only get five shifts of 10 hours, and at a few pits where there are big families you may be able in a few cases to lay idle every fifth boy in order to work the Saturday. In these cases the boys only work 50 hours a week, or 100 in a fortnight. But at the majority of the collieries there is not a sufficient number of boys to work the pits owing to this 54 hours regulation, and their places have to be made up with boys out of the night-shift, shifters, rolleyway-men, and other people who have to take their places on the Saturday when we work the six days. Altogether we are, as I have said, pinched for boys as it is already.

2988. And that being so, could you say that it is impracticable, if not impossible, to get a sufficient number to have a double shift of boys?—Yes, quite impracticable. At present we have at the collieries to go outside the class of boy labour and get adult labour to do the boys' work. Our boys, as a rule, of course only work—even those that work the half-day on Saturday—104 hours in the fortnight—that is 54 hours one week and 50 the next. If the Mines Regulation Act had given us 108 hours a fortnight instead of 54 hours a week, it would have been a great advantage to the pits in the North of England.

2989. Would there be objections, if not of the same kind, of another kind, to a single shift of eight hours for everybody?—Oh, that would be equally bad, because, in the first place, we should have to reduce the number of hewers by about 30 per cent to get the work out by the boys only working a short time. If the boys were only working eight hours as it is suggested, there could only be about six and a half hours for the boys to get the coals conveyed along in the place of nine hours at the present time. That would mean at once, supposing the same number of boys are employed, a reduction of 30 per cent. of hewers assuming we could find them all pit room; but it is not possible, in the way the mines are laid out in Northumberland, and the way the mines are there worked, to find pit room for the men to work a single shift.

2990. Now then, suppose an Eight Hours Act were passed, and it had to be complied with, and there was a single shift, how much time do you think that would leave for coal drawing, with eight hours from bank to bank for everybody. Of course it would vary at different collieries, but could you give an average for Northumberland?—I do not think it would be much more than six and a half hours. Six and a half to seven hours would be the very outside for coal drawing. It would take a man probably half an hour to go to his place, and half an hour to go back, and after he got to his place he would not have coals ready; the boys would have to wait for him. He would have to get the coals ready, and they would not have much more than about six and a half hours to travel the coal from the working face to the bottom of the pit.

2991. Then may I say, that so far as Northumberland is concerned, that your opinion is, that a single shift of eight hours would be out of the question altogether?—That is not only my opinion, but the opinion of the Association which has discussed it, and that was every one's opinion at that discussion.

Mr. *Trow.*

2992. With regard to your joint committee, I suppose you believe in the principle on which your joint committee was formulated?—Yes, it has worked very satisfactorily; therefore one approves of it.

2993. The chairman is an independent chairman, not connected with the trade in any way?—Yes, the present one happens to be county coroner for South Northumberland; the preceding one was a county court judge.

2994. He hears the evidence on both sides, and, if necessary, gives a decision?—Yes, that is so. Each party approaches each other first to try to arrive at an agreement if possible, and it is only in the event of it being six and six that he has to give a decision.

2995. You agree with his principle?—Yes; we do.

2996. And you would certainly think it very bad on the part of the workmen if they refused to accept the decision?—We have very few cases indeed where they ever object in any shape or form.

2997. You would think it was very bad behaviour on their part if they did refuse to concur?—Yes, after having entered into an arrangement, it would be bad behaviour on either side not to carry it out.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

2998. While you believe in arbitration in these cases, on what ground do you object to it in general cases?—In many instances we have agreed to it in general cases. It is only in special cases we have objected to it.

2999. Why do you object in special cases, because the same principle is involved in the small matters where the chairman hears the evidence and gives a decision, upon what ground do you base your objection in a special case while you believe in these joint committee decisions?—The answer to that is in certain special cases when we have put our backs to the wall we do not care to leave it in any one's hands except our own.

3000. Would it not be due to the fact, in a special case, that either the workmen or the employers failed to make their case out?—Not necessarily so. We thought in 1877 that we made our case out up to the hilt, but then unfortunately the umpire did not think it.

3001. Then you see you had not made your case out?—Not to his liking.

3002. If you had not made your case out to the chairman of your joint committee's liking, he gives a decision and you accept it; now if you made your case out equally well in the case of a general question before the umpire he gives his decision upon the evidence?—Yes, and we accept it; but it does not necessarily follow that we always approve or like even the decision of the chairman of the joint committee.

3003. You do not like it when he goes against you, but you bear it?—We accept it; we bear it.

3004. The wages lost were 250,000*l.*?—That is so.

3005. The loss to the colliery owners was 50,000*l.*?—No, 55,000*l.* That is simply in money paid away for various objects, not including anything for interest upon capital or depreciation or anything of that sort.

3006. Now the amount in dispute was 15 per cent. at the commencement?—Yes.

3007. You would have accepted less if the men could have come with a definite offer. Now I want to know how much the coal owners would have lost or saved, because 15 per cent. deducted from 250,000*l.* hardly reaches 55,000*l.* I want to know how much you would have gained or lost if you had gone before an umpire and he had given you what you considered an unfavourable award, less than the 15 per cent.?—I do not follow that.

3008. If you had paid the 15 per cent. over the whole period it would not have cost you the 55,000*l.* that you lost?—Possibly; but then that reduction extended over a longer period than 17 weeks.

3009. But you lost that during the 17 weeks, and you did not get the 15 per cent. after the 17 weeks?—We got 12½.

3010. From 12½ down to 5?—Yes; that would in a year come to something like 100,000*l.*

3011. But if you had taken half the reduction at the time you might have got the other half before half the 12 months had gone?—I do not quite follow. I fancy that the loss that the

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

owners suffered—this 55,000*l.*—would be repaid to them within the course of the following year.

3012. It would be repaid, you think?—It was repaid I have no doubt.

3013. Then add to it the loss in interest and depreciation, and see how much you are in pocket if you can?—It was not that. It was of necessity we were obliged to do it.

3014. I cannot understand the necessity that causes you a loss?—It was the least loss. We went to do it at the least loss. 250,000*l.* represents the loss in wages for 17 weeks only, not for a year.

3015. 55,000*l.* represents your loss for 17 weeks, less depreciation, which would be considerable?—Yes.

Chairman.

3016. What Mr. Trow is evidently seeking to elicit from you is the recognition, that if by referring the matter to arbitration you ran the risk of inadequate relief, on the other hand, by going into a strike, you not only ran a risk, but you certainly encountered a considerable loss?—We did for the time being; but of course, we went into the strike most reluctantly. We thought it was a necessity, and that the loss would be recouped to us in the following eight or nine months.

Mr. *Trow.*

3017. That does not necessarily follow?—It did in this particular case I am speaking of.

3018. Did you keep the coal up to the price?—We did for that year, but the following year it fell, and the reduction we then got in wages enabled us to live the following year. Coal fell about 3*d.* a ton.

Mr. *Abraham.*

3019. What class of boys do you find this difficulty in finding?—We call them boys when they are under 21.

3020. Are they boys under 16 or young persons up to 20 whom you have a difficulty in finding?—Both.

3021. With respect to which class do you have the greater difficulty, under 16 or above 16?—The greater difficulty is with those under 16, for this reason, because we can only work them five days a week. We have to find other help for the sixth day.

3022. I allude to the difficulty you have mentioned in getting a sufficient number of boys for your employment?—It is for boys under 16 that we have the greater difficulty, because we can only work them 50 hours a week, and we want them to work 60 hours a week, to work the pits six days in one week and five in the other.

3023. Then you have no difficulty in finding young men from 16 up to 21?—Of boys of 16 and upwards we have just about sufficient. In some cases we have not enough, even for what we call putter boys, we are sometimes a little

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

bit straitened for them. But it does not pinch us so much between 16 and 20 as it does between 12 and 16, owing to the fact of their being allowed to work only 54 hours per week.

3024. What is the real difficulty in the way of reducing the hours of young persons from 15 to 21?—Because we have just sufficient now to manage the work; we have not a surplus.

3025. Do you really mean to tell the Committee that your difficulty is in finding the boys, and not a question of the payment?—Yes, the difficulty is in finding a sufficient number of boys.

3026. If you had a sufficient number of them then you would be willing to reduce the hours?—No, because I do not think it would be practicable. We have not pit room sufficient to put them into a single shift.

3027. I am not speaking about a single shift at all?—That would follow I fancy. Will you repeat your question again.

3028. Take your own mode of working the double shift as you do now, could you get a sufficient number of boys, would you then agree to reduce their hours, or would not that remove the difficulty you laid before the Commission this morning?—We could not get a sufficient number of boys. We have barely sufficient to keep us going now.

3029. Admitting that, we have to suppose things sometimes, I want to find your real difficulty, whether it is the difficulty of finding them or the objection to paying them if you had them. Is it a physical difficulty or a monetary difficulty?—It is a physical difficulty in finding them.

3030. Then if you had sufficient you would be willing to reduce the number of hours?—Everything else being equal.

3031. If a number of miners can find a sufficient number of boys you will have no objection to reduce the hours from 10 down to eight?—If we could see our way to do so without incurring loss we should be glad to do so. I have said so.

3032. Then the question of loss does come in?—It comes in in a way, no doubt.

3033. The difficulty of finding them is not the difficulty after all?—It is the difficulty, because we have hardly sufficient to keep us going at the present time.

3034. But supposing that the miners would find you a sufficient number of boys for the employment, would you then object to reducing the hours?—It is not so, nor is it likely to be so, because, owing to the working of thin seams of coal, we require more miners, and therefore more boys.

3035. Do not you think that the hours that you work these young men may have something to do with the difficulty you have of finding sufficient of them?—It would simply lead to the abolishing of the double shift.

3036. Is the real difficulty a monetary difficulty or a physical difficulty?—It is a physical difficulty. We have not boys sufficient to keep us going at present.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

3037. That is the real difficulty?—That is the difficulty. And also the further difficulty would be that to shorten the boys' hours we could not work a double shift. The double shift goes from 3.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at present. The pits draw coals from 10 to 11 hours per day.

3038. If you had sufficient boys you would not object to reducing their hours?—As long as we work the double shift, I do not see how we could reduce the boys' hours.

3039. If you had any number, you do not see the way clear to reduce them?—Not so long as we work the double shift.

3040. Will you kindly inform us when were the hours of young persons first fixed in the Northumberland district?—I should think the Miners' Association have always been at us to reduce the boys' hours. I cannot tell you when they were first reduced. I know I have some minutes here of these being reduced in 1871. I will very gladly read you that. I see on December 2, 1871, "Mr. Burt and a deputation "from the Miners' Association attended, and "after discussing the request of the Associa- "tion, the following resolution was agreed to "by the owners and handed to the deputation: "'That from and after the 1st of January "'1872, the foreshift goes in at 4 o'clock in the "'morning and the boys at 6, and that the pit "'ceases to draw coal at 5 o'clock in the "'evening, making the boys work 11 hours "'each day.' The deputation having returned, "the resolution was read over to them. They "were also distinctly to understand that the "back shift was to go down at 10 o'clock, and "that each shift was to hew six hours in the "face, and that the Association should en- "deavour as far as possible to prevent the large "amount of lying idle now prevalent. Mr. "Burt thought the arrangement respecting the "men would be satisfactory, and thanked the "meeting for their consideration, but with "respect to the boys they had considered "10 hours as a maximum time that they should "be down the pit. Would the 11 hours pro- "posed be from bank to bank. The Chairman "represented that the sudden reduction of the "boys' labour by two hours would cause incon- "venience. They had better diminish one "hour at first, and wait till the Mines Regula- "tion Bill (which he felt confident would pass "early in the session) should fix definitely what "the boys' hours should be. The proposed "change meant that the boys should work "one hour less than at present; but that as far "as practicable the time from bank to bank "should not exceed 11 hours. Mr. Burt replied "that he thought these conditions would be "considered as a satisfactory solution of the "difficulty, and that should the Mines Regula- "tion Bill not soon become law, they would ask "permission to wait again on the trade, and "renew their petition. The Chairman stated "that they would be very glad to see them. "He thought that when any difficulties "between the employers and the employed "occurred there was nothing so desirable as

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

" their meeting face to face to discuss their " differences. The deputation then retired." That was in December.

3041. That was bringing the hours of the boys from 12 to 11?—From 12 to 11. Then there was a subsequent meeting.

3042. Would you inform us in what year they were fixed at 12?—I could not tell that. I began my mining life in 1859. The boys' hours then were about 12½ hours, and they were to be down the pit ready to start at a quarter to 6, and they came out of the pit at a quarter to 6 at night. That was in the year 1859, and this was in 1871 when they were altered from 12 to 11.

3043. From 1859 to 1871 they were 12 hours?—Yes; at least so far as my knowledge of mining goes. I am speaking of my knowledge there.

3044. From 1859 to 1871 would be 12 years?—Yes, that would be 12 years.

3045. Have you lately reduced the hours of the boys?—Yes, they were reduced again at the request of the workmen (Mr. Burt and his colleagues) at the end of 1872, to 10 hours on December 28th, 1872.

Chairman.

3046. To the present hours?—Yes, in December 1872 they were reduced to 10 hours.

Mr. *Abraham.*

3047. All the boys in Northumberland?—All the boys in Northumberland—every one of them—everybody under 21, by the request of the Miners' Association.

3048. In 1872?—In 1872.

3049. None of them working 11?—Not in 1872—not until 1877—in fact, until some time after that. They worked 10 hours from the end of 1872 up to the end of 1878. The owners then sought for the boys to work 11 hours. The miners objected to it, and, in consequence of the strenuous opposition that they then showed, and the remarks that were made to the owners, the resolution reads that they would not insist upon that part of their demand being carried out through the representations from the Miners' Association. Practically in 1879, 1880, and 1881, when the pits began to draw coals from 10 hours to 11, many of these boys did work 11 hours upon getting further payment, that is to say, boys over 16, they were induced by the promise of more payment to lengthen their hours, and in many collieries they did work 11 hours until this year. In the collieries under my charge the putter boys never worked more than 10 hours; the driver boys, that is, boys over 16, between 16 and 20, worked 10½ hours at my own collieries up till about May of this year, and then the Miners' Association waited upon us, and we had one or two conferences with the result of an arrangement come to between the two associations, which I can read, that the boys now are working 10 hours, with the exception of boys that are working in connexion with endless ropes and chains. The rest of the boys under 21 are now working 10 hours.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

3050. You have given us the facts in your own case, but is it not the fact that with regard to the association which you represent here to-day that the hours that were shortened in 1872 were put back again in 1879 or 1880, as a rule?—In many cases they were slidden back to 10½ and 11, but I think the bulk would be 10½, not 11.

3051. If the miners themselves had said they were 11 that would not be strictly correct, would it?—To say that the hours of all the boys were 11 is not strictly correct, because I tell you most of mine work 10, and the other portion of them only work 10½.

3052. I am speaking of the boys in general under the association?—The boys in general under the association I should not think have averaged more than about 10½ hours between 1880 and the present time, and they were induced to do so by, of course, giving them more wages.

Chairman.

3053. They are now back to the hours that were agreed upon in 1872?—Yes, they are now back to the hours that were then agreed to.

3054. And are limited to 10, except in the case of a limited number of boys?—Yes, in connexion with endless ropes and chains. No boys' hours, except those are longer than 10.

Mr. *Abraham.*

3055. Then, according to your evidence, it took 12 years to reduce the hours of those boys from 12½ to 11?—No, I think it began, and crept in and crept in in some collieries more than others. In my own collieries, although I had permission to work to draw coals 11 hours, I never did it, and it was some time before I even worked 10½ hours.

3056. Speaking generally, according to your evidence it took about 12 years to effect that reduction of the hours of these young persons from 12½ to 11?—No.

3057. Then, with the exception of the intervening years, from 1872 to 1879, it has also taken 20 years to reduce them from 11 to 10?—No, one year from 11 to 10. They were reduced between the years 1872 and 1873 from 11 to 10.

3058. And they went back again?—No; then they went 10 hours from 1873 up to the end of 1879, and then from 1879 up to 1891 the hours of these boys were some of them lengthened up to 10½ and 11, and varying in less proportions. I think I ought to say that the putter boys in the whole of that time, which represented, probably, half the boys between 16 years and the age of 20, never worked more than 10 hours. It was only the driver boys and the incline boys, and that class of labour, that were lengthened from 10½ to 11, probably 4 per cent. of the whole

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

of the people employed. The putter boys were always 10 hours working. I only know two exceptions where the putter boys worked 11 hours.

3059. When would that commence?—It commenced between 1879 and 1891. It was when the hours of drawing coals were lengthened from 10 hours to 11.

3060. Up to then they were all working 12¼ hours?—No; up to then they were all working 10 hours. They were working 10 hours from the end of 1872 to the end of 1879, and the pits were drawing coals 10 hours at that time.

3061. I understood you to say that up to 1859 they were working 12¼ hours?—Yes.

3062. Then down to 1879 they were reduced to 11?—Yes, at the end of 1871.

3063. In 1872 they were reduced to 10?—Yes.

3064. In 1879 they were advanced?—No, they were never advanced by any resolution of the owners; but they were gradually lengthened by the managers persuading the boys to stay up to 11 hours.

3065. It does not matter to me whether it was by resolution or otherwise—is it a fact?—I am telling you it was a fact that, bit by bit, the boys' hours were lengthened, commencing about the autumn of 1879; some probably in 1880, 1881, 1882, and 1883, just as the employers lengthened the hours of drawing from 10 up to 11. The putter boys' hours were not lengthened, except in one or two cases that I know of, to 11. But the drivers and incline boys' hours were lengthened to 10½ and 11; but there was no specific year when this was done. It came in piece-meal between 1879 and 1891, and in 1891 that state of things was altered upon representations from the Miners' Association, and things are brought back to the same position in which they were at the end of 1872. I cannot make it clearer.

3066. I think, in 1889, the Miners' Association reports that they have over 5 per cent. of young men working between 10 and 11 hours per day; so that in that year you had that number of young persons working between 10 and 11, and the hours of that class, I understand, have been since reduced back again to 10?—All boys between 16 and 21 are now working 10 hours, with the exception of a few on the endless rope and chains.

3067. So that from 1859 to 1891, amicable efforts have been resorted to to reduce the hours of these boys—Trade Union efforts?—Yes, always through representations from the workmen.

3068. Have the men, through their representatives, made any representations for reducing the hours all round of all classes to 8?—No, they have never asked us to reduce the hours of labour all round to 8. They know it would not work, therefore they have not come forward with such a proposal.

3069. Were you in the district in 1888?—I have been where I am now since the year 1872—19 years—in Northumberland.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

3070. Have you ever heard this resolution being made a request to the Association of which you are a member, that 8 hours in the 24 be the maximum day's work for all persons employed underground where the single shift is worked, and 7 hours where the double shift is worked, the time to be worked from bank to bank?—I have a vague recollection of something like that about two years ago, and it was, of course, declined.

3071. It was declined?—I am not positive upon that. I would not like to be sure unless I looked up the minutes, but I have a sort of vague recollection. It may be from reading a newspaper.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

3072. Am I right in supposing that the Coal Mines Regulation Act provides 54 hours per week for lads under 16?—That is so.

3073. And the Act of 1872 did the same?—That is so.

3074. Do you consider that boys working that number of hours find it injurious to their health?—Not the slightest. I have asked the medical man, our colliery doctor, whether he thought their hours were at all injurious to their health, and from what he told me, and what I have seen myself, I think their present hours do not affect their health in the slightest.

3075. I think you said in reply to Mr. Balfour, that you hoped there would not be a strike if a reduction of wages was asked, but that you would prefer the sliding scale being established?—That is so.

3076. Do I gather from that that you fear, in case there were a reduction now asked, the Conference which you now hold would not prevent a strike?—No; I think the disposition on the part of both of the Associations would be to give us some relief, but not probably to the extent that we would want. We have already asked them for a reduction, and they have not seen their way to agree to it. That was in the summer. But I think events will soon be too strong both for them and for us, and that they will be asked; and from what I know of the Northumberland men, I think they will meet us in some way, if they will not go all the way. In the various advances we made from time to time, we were always assured by Mr. Burt, and those he represented, they would meet us in the downward grade in the same way as we met them going up; and from what I know of them we expect to be treated very much on the same lines, naturally, perhaps, coming down a little slower than we went up.

3077. But you would prefer the sliding scale to your present plan?—I think so, because it would be self-acting without all these conferences and these doubts as to our asking for 5 per cent. and getting 3, and asking for 7 and getting 4. If we could agree upon a mutual basis it would be self-acting, and there would be less friction, and it would be better in every way. The tendency of the present way

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

is this, that the men are putting us into the same hole that they did before, refusing to give us these reductions until we have to come and ask them for something big. My experience is this, that if the men would only see their way to meet us in time, we would not have to ask for such large reductions, and it is such figures as 12½ per cent. or 10 per cent. that make the men set their backs up against the owners' propositions.

Sir *E. Harland.*

3078. You told us that you remember being associated with mining so long that you have a pretty thorough knowledge of the practical work of a miner, and of the various branches of the work?—Yes.

3079. I presume you have also some knowledge of other branches of work, such as joiners, and other mechanics above ground?—So far as they are connected with mining.

3080. Are you aware that in these branches there are apprentices in many instances put to learn these branches of business?—We have them amongst the mechanics in mining, but not very many.

3081. At any rate, perhaps you may have heard that there are apprentices generally associated, learning their trades?—Yes.

3082. Have you heard that the number of apprentices has latterly been sought to be reduced, and has practically been reduced, by representations from the Trade Unions associated with these various branches of trade?—I see from the newspapers—that is all my information—that there is a dispute upon that very point, I believe at Newcastle, at this very moment, but not with the collieries at all.

3083. Have you any information as to whether the object of the number of apprentices being sought to be reduced is with reference to its having a tendency to more journeymen being required in these branches of business?—I have never heard the question of apprentices raised in connexion with coal-mining in any shape or form.

3084. There is no class of apprentices learning the mining trade?—We have apprentice joiners and apprentice smiths, but they are very few in number, and no question has ever arisen about their being too numerous or too few.

3085. I put the question in this direction, do you think that the object of the Miners' Association, in seeking to have the hours of boys and young men shortened, is in order to benefit their health, or do you think it is done in the hope of compelling the employer to employ more adults than he otherwise now finds necessary in view of the work which the boys are able to perform?—I do not quite follow your question.

3086. Suppose that the young men who now work 10 or 11 hours were required to work only 8, would that necessitate more journeymen or adults being put on to the work?—We would have to get adults then, because we have not boys to do the work.

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

3087. Then, in other words, the fewer the hours of the boys the more men would be required to be engaged in the colliery?—Yes, that would be so.

3088. Do you think it is in that direction that the Association of Workmen wish to have the change made rather than in the direction of improving the health of the young men by their working less hours?—As far as our own Association of Workmen is concerned, I think their wish is, when they can, to get the boys' hours shortened with a view to giving the boys more leisure time for other purposes on the surface. I rather fancy the idea of a universal eight hours' day is to find more employment for the spare population.

3089. I am not referring to the eight hours for the men. What object has the Miners' Association in seeking to have the hours of the boys reduced rather than the hours of the men? We have gathered from the evidence here, that the men generally are not so anxious to have the hours reduced; but we gather also that there is an anxiety from some cause or another to reduce the hours of the boys and apparently very much to the inconvenience of the managers of the mines. What is the reason of their desire to have the hours of the boys so reduced?—That desire does not emanate from the Northumberland miners at all. They see that if the boys' hours were reduced, it would entail longer hours upon themselves.

3090. From your point of view, do you think the wish on the part of the men to have the hours of the boys reduced arises from a desire to improve the health of the boys, or is it in order that by reducing the hours of the boys more men would be required to be worked in the mine?—I think the motive is, possibly, partly with a view to the boy's health, and also that the boys may have more leisure to educate themselves and to enjoy themselves by being fewer hours in the mine. It is not on account of the hardness of their work when they are there.

3091. You do not think that the work down the pit for the boys is any more severe than that of the men, allowing for the difference in physical strength?—I do think the physical labour of the men is much greater in itself than the physical work of the boys.

3092. So that your answer would be that if it is desirable that the boys' hours should be curtailed, then the men's hours for the same reason should be curtailed?—No. The boys' hours are sought to be curtailed in order that they may have more leisure—the men already have sufficient leisure.

3093. The nature of the boys' work is such that whilst the hours may be longer in the aggregate they are not called upon to perform more physical work than the hewers or the adults would be, relatively to their age?—I do not think the boys perform as much physical labour, in their time in proportion to what the hewers do in their time.

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

3094. So that you, from your own observation, do not think there is any great point in this movement, that the boys should be allowed to work less hours?—I do not think there is any hardship at all upon the boys working 10 hours, either as to their health or even their enjoyment.

3095. Whilst, on the other hand, you have stated to us it would lead to serious inconvenience in the management of the work, if the boys did work shorter hours than they do at present?—I think it would lead to a very great inconvenience, and, in the normal state of trade, to the closing of many collieries.

3096. You have said, with regard to arbitration, that not only you do not object to it, but that you are in favour of it, although you would prefer a sliding scale if it could be worked; but you have also referred to circumstances when arbitration could hardly be a method likely to be agreed to by the employers. Am I to gather from what you have said that the time may arrive when the selling price of coal has gone down to so low a figure that it would become a question to the coal-owner of simply getting a new shilling for an old one—no margin being left?—It is worse than that, very often. Upon the two occasions which have been referred to the collieries were being closed right and left, and the owners had to take up the position of objecting to go before an umpire.

3097. In other words, where the cost of production is greater than the selling price, you, as coal proprietors, object to the case being left to arbitration, where the same wages were required to be paid, or even perhaps it might be an advance demanded?—Practically that was what occurred in 1877 and in 1886.

3098. Then that would be the position, you think, on the part of the coal-owner?—Yes.

3099. I think you said the wages of the workmen were about 80*l.* a year?—Last year about 80*l.* a year was the average wage of hewers.

Sir *John Gorst.*

3100. Boys begin to work in coal mines at 12 years of age, do they not?—That is so, and on the surface at 13.

3101. Would there be about the same number of boys of every age from 12 up to 16—say at 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 years of age?—Yes, I think there is about an equal draft coming in each year.

3102. Then they go on working, and learn to become hewers?—Yes; when they are about 20 or 21 they generally become either hewers or stonemen.

3103. The age used to be lower than 12; when was it raised to 12?—By the Act of 1872, I think.

3104. Before the Coal Mines Regulation Act?—That was the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1872.

3105. Was it by that Coal Mines Regulation Act?—I am just wondering whether it was that Act or the one preceding it—there was an Act before that—I think it was in 185[illegible].

3106. Before 1872 what was the age at which boys began to work in the mines?—Ten.

3107. Now, supposing the limit of age was raised by statute to 14, would that cause any dislocation in the working of your mines?—Yes, it would seriously affect the supply of boy labour, and it might have this effect, that the elder boys would be kept longer from going to hew, or to do other work when they became men, in consequence.

3108. Would you be opposed to any proposal of that kind?—Certainly; because I do not think the conditions of their labour are at all a hardship to them at present, at 12 years of age, and it would interfere very much with the proper working of the mine.

3109. Does a boy of 12 work alternate days?—No, a boy of 12 works 10 hours a day for five days a week, but of course he goes to the lightest work that we have, such as the opening and shutting of a door.

3110. Does that not very seriously interfere with the education; does it not stop it altogether?—The boys of 12 years of age, now-a-days, have all passed the 4th Standard.

3111. In your opinion is the 4th Standard a sufficiently high standard for the children of the country generally?—It is left with the local authority, and in our district it has been fixed that after the boys have passed the 4th Standard they can go to work.

3112. After they go down the pit at 12, all further education stops, except attendance at night schools or voluntary education?—Yes, that is so, excepting night schools or attending classes such as the Science and Art classes, and lectures of that sort.

3113. Are you aware that the age at which boys go down in mines in England is very much lower than that in other European countries?—No, I am not aware of that.

3114. Would you think it a fair thing for the English age to be raised to the same level as the Belgian, French, and German age?—No; I think that we know our own business quite as well as the French and the Germans know theirs; and I think if we have decided upon 12 years of age that that is quite good enough for us.

3115. If a French or German boy's education is not complete at 12, what ground is there for saying that an English boy's education is complete at that age?—Perhaps he does not go to school so soon; and he may not be so apt at learning as an English boy.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

3116. There was one suggestion put forward with a view to shortening the hours of the boys, which I do not think we have had your opinion upon. It is that which is given by Mr. Young, at the end of Question 2164, and it is to the effect that the pits should draw coals for 10 hours, as at present, but that the boys should have nine hours shifts, a portion of them going down as

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

at present, and another portion an hour later. What is your view of that particular suggestion?—I think that answer of Mr. Young's comes from a misconception of the working of some of the collieries at present. I think he bases it upon some collieries now drawing coals 11 hours. It arises in this way: With those collieries one side of the pit works 10 hours and the other side of the pit works 10 hours, but the boys themselves are only down 10 hours on each side of the pit. It is the different sides going, and one side beginning an hour sooner than the other, and ending an hour sooner, which has, I think, given Mr. Young his impression.

3117. There is no colliery then, at present, in which the system, as he described it, is actually in force?—No. I think that is where he has misunderstood the idea of this pit's hours of work.

3118. Would it be possible to adopt such a system as that?—I do not think it would, practically.

3119. What would be the objection to it?—The difficulty would be to find the labour for the odd hour—you would have to bring adults in to work that one hour. Adults would not do the work nearly so well, or so effectively, as boys; and then, after that one hour, they would have to go to other work which now requires eight hours, but they would only have seven hours then to do the work that they are now doing in eight. Not only that, but the scene of their labour might be a mile-and-a-half away.

Chairman.

3120. In reference to this suggested Wages Board, you stated, I think, that the proposal in regard thereto made by the Northumberland Miners' Association included the appointment of an umpire?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

3121. But that the Northumberland owners, so far as they are entertaining the matter, did not see their way to include that provision?—Yes.

3122. Under those circumstances then the Wages Board would be an investigating and a deliberating and a negotiating body, but it would have no machinery for actually issuing a question if a difficulty arose?—I think we were guided in that by the assumption that each association would give their respective members full powers to settle. That, in agreeing to form this committee, the Miners' Association would give their number—8 or 10, or whatever it is—9 I think it was, full powers to investigate and to settle; and we would have the same powers on our side, and that by mutual compromising we could agree.

3123. It would be probably an improvement upon anything that exists, but there still would be the risk of failure to agree on the part of the two sides to the Wages Court?—Yes, there is still that fear which we have not provided for at the present time. I may say that the question is only in its initiatory stage. We had only our meeting on Saturday, and one of the principal gentlemen, Mr. Ralph Young, who has been here, was unable to attend, and we did not get that full information that we should have liked; we did not get beyond merely accepting the principle of a board and saying that we are quite willing in the first place, at all events, to join with them and to hear what they have got to say; that is the position in which the case now stands. I quite hope that it will be able to be applied, as far as my own feeling is concerned.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. ROBERT ORMSTON LAMB called and examined.

Chairman.

3124. You are the chairman of the Northumberland Coalowners' Association?—I am.

3125. You have heard the evidence given by Mr. Weeks on behalf of that body?—Yes.

3126. Do you generally concur in it?—I do.

3127. Are there any points on which you would desire to supplement his evidence?—I should only just like to say that we find the existing relationship as between the owners and the miners has given satisfaction, and I think, on the whole, has prevented great friction occurring. The system of the joint committee and the system of the two associations meeting together has been, in my opinion, very beneficial.

3128. I think it would be needless to take you through the exact questions either embodied in the printed communication of the Commission or those that were addressed to Mr. Weeks, but if you would, yourself, volunteer any statement supplementing that of Mr. Weeks', it would be desirable. There may be points, perhaps, that he has left for you to deal with?—The Association is opposed to legislative interference with the hours of labour, and we consider that, to shorten the hours of the boys would be detrimental to our mode of working; in fact, having regard to the quantity of coal produced in Northumberland owing to the arrangement of the collieries, it is essential to have a double-shift system. Without this double-shift system I do not suppose any colliery could be worked to a profit.

Chairman—continued.

3129. Therefore, any scheme for shortening the hours of boys must proceed, you think, upon the basis of the continuance of the double-shift of hewers?—Yes, that is recognised by all.

3130. Would you agree with Mr. Weeks that not only would it be impracticable to reduce the number of shifts of hewers, but that it would be equally impracticable to increase the number of hewers' shifts?—With reference to increasing the hewers' shifts, I may have heard of that before, but I have never known it placed before the Association in a practical way. I am in-

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

3139. Do you agree with Mr. Weeks as to the difficulty of shortening the hours of the boys in Northumberland?—I do.

3140. If it were attainable, may I put it, would you consider it a desirable thing to have them down to, say, eight per day?—If it could be done, certainly—if it could possibly be done. But the question has been thought out, and it is the general opinion amongst all the experts I have spoken to, that it would be impracticable. I do not think, though the time the boys may stay down the pit now seems long, that the nature of their work is detrimental to them. I have not heard that they suffer from illness, and they always appear to me, when I have seen them come from their work, exceedingly cheerful, and in good preservation.

3141. Reference was made by Mr. Weeks, in some detail, to the various interviews with the coalowners on occasions when the miners, through their representatives, had asked for a reduction in the hours of the boys. I daresay you will remember in 1871, prior to the passing of the Mines Regulation Act, the hours were reduced, as Mr. Weeks mentioned, from 12 to 11?—Yes.

3142. Do I correctly understand you to say, that apart from questions of increased cost of production—apart from the economic side of the question altogether, there would be great practical difficulties in reducing the hours to eight in Northumberland?—I think there would. I understand it that to carry out our present system of working it is essential to us—it would be impossible to reduce the hours.

3143. Then it would not be correct to say that so far as the coalowners are concerned they would readily accede to a proposal of that sort?—Of course, the coal trade in Northumberland, for a great many years past, has been a very unpaying property to hold. It is only latterly that there has been an improvement—during the last three years. I do not think you would get any discreet coalowner to agree to work his collieries in view of the fact that the prices are not only now falling, but are falling rapidly, and that we do not know what they may be in the future; and, if before we could not work the collieries without a loss, one would not invite a loss by increasing and enhancing the cost of production upon a falling market.

3144. I do not care to put hypothetical questions, but suppose somebody should say that the cost of production could be diminished and the produce increased, of course the two would go together very likely, other things being equal, and that the coalowners as well as the workmen would benefit by the change; there would not, I presume, be any indisposition to listen to and to favourably consider a proposal of the kind?—I do not know that there would, but if you do put a hypothetical question there, a great deal depends upon an *if*.

3145. With reference to the strike of 1887, which I think I may say you deplored as much as anybody did probably, do you entirely agree with Mr. Weeks' views on the negotiations at that time?—Yes, I do. I took a very great interest in all the negotiations that took place, and I think that Mr. Weeks has truthfully described the situation during that period.

3146. Now look for a moment at the suggestion of Mr. Young which has been mentioned. Mr. Young expressed the opinion before this Commission that if the owners and managers had met the men at the time before the feeling became acute, but when the owners saw that they must have a reduction of wages, if they had then met the workmen and talked the matter over with them, and given them evidence such as they could command to show that the collieries were losing—as many of them were said to be at that time—that the strike might have been averted, are you of that opinion?—I doubt it; the main reason, I believe, for that strike was our asking for 12½ per cent. or 15 per cent., was it not?

3147. Fifteen per cent.?—That we asked at first. Had we some time before made the demands in smaller amounts, as Mr. Weeks put it, of 2½ per cent. or 5 per cent., possibly the strike might have been averted. The coalowners acted through not wishing, I presume, to have difficulties with the men, and possibly they might have hoped against hope that trade would have revived, and they did not wish to disturb the pleasant relationship which existed in Northumberland between them and the men. But afterwards I am sure everything was done by you and others, delegates, to show the men absolutely the position of affairs. No doubt when the battle had once commenced blood was heated and men did not reason—or at least they were prejudiced from my point of view. I do not say they are any worse than many other classes of people who begin a battle.

3148. What I really have in my mind is this: From time to time, and I may say always, so far as I am concerned as the representative of the men, for many years past you have been ready to give me the fullest information at any time, either during the strike—perhaps it is no breach of confidence for me to say that—or at other times. Much of this information was given in confidence, perhaps that was a necessity of the case, and I make no complaint at all, but it was impossible for it to be used. If the workmen could have had this information either through me or other representatives, or more directly from the coalowners and managers themselves, are you of opinion that a strike such as we had in 1887 would have been avoided?—Certainly, I am of that opinion; had the men been as reasonable as those gentlemen on their side with whom I spoke and to whom I gave the information which you allude to, but I am afraid that that information, even if I had conveyed it myself to the men engaged in the collieries with which I am connected, would not have carried conviction, because on previous occasions, though not in the year you are alluding to, when I have been in a losing colliery and have endeavoured to make explanations, and have, in point of fact, stated

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

absolutely the conditions under which that colliery was worked, I do not think it resulted in any good to myself; the answer used to be—of course in that case it was rather different—that the wages must determine themselves, and if a concern was not profitable, of course the men who could get work elsewhere and were selling their labour must go to the best market. But it was not for want of information, I mean to say, that the men acted as they did. Though it would have been impossible, of course, to have conveyed to the men of Northumberland the ins and outs of each commercial concern—it would be practically impossible to carry on your business if you did that—they were told repeatedly by the coalowners and by every one connected with the collieries, and by the delegates also, the absolute state of affairs. I should think there never was a period when there was more publicity given to the facts of the case than there was in the year 1887.

Chairman.

3149. The second sliding scale agreement ended on December 31st, 1886, did it not?—Yes.

3150. This strike or suspension of work began in January 1887?—It did.

3151. By whom was the sliding scale terminated?—In 1886 by the owners.

3152. Then in the negotiations which ensued in January for a reduction of wages at the instance of the owners, who claimed 15 per cent., was there laid before the men an ascertainment of the selling price up to December the 31st, such as would have been forthcoming under the sliding scale had it been continued?—Yes. We have had the sliding scale prices taken out by the accountants invariably, though the sliding scale itself had terminated. We employ our own accountants and we have used those figures on many occasions, I should think always in our negotiations with the miners' officials.

3153. That is to say, that the Miners' Association had laid before it by the owners in the negotiations in January 1887, the ascertained price up to December 31st.

(Mr. *Weeks.*) Up to November 30th the Miners' Association had paid for that information; they were at half the cost.

(*Chairman.*) The sliding scale had then ended?

(Mr. *Weeks.*) Yes, the ascertainment is announced in the third week in December and is up to the preceding November for three months; it was taken out every three months.

3154. (*To the witness.*) But the owners having given notice to terminate the sliding scale, did so because they thought the relation of wages to prices thereby established was too high?—Yes, the prices were very low at that time.

3155. Did the difference of opinion between you and the Miners' Association, which resulted in your separating and suspended work, turn upon their unwillingness to recognise such a rate

Chairman—continued.

of wages as the recent sliding scale would have given, or did it turn upon your wanting a lower rate of wages than the recently terminated sliding scale would have given?—I think it was on account of our wishing for a lower rate than the sliding scale would have given. There is no objection to putting in a comparison of the sliding scales.

3156. Had that sliding scale so terminated in 1886 a minimum, or had it no minimum?—It had no minimum.

3157. Therefore, the owners' dissatisfaction with it did not turn upon the absence of a minimum; it turned upon their belief that in the lower ranges of prices the wages were by the sliding scale too high?—That was so.

Mr. *Trow.*

3158. I am scarcely clear upon this question of the sliding scale; was it that the low rates prevailing after the ascertainment for November were such as to make you believe that you could not pay on the ascertained prices up to November?—The sliding scale terminated.

3159. I understand the sliding scale terminated, and the ascertainment was taken out to the end of November?—Yes.

3160. But it was in a falling market, and the men were prepared to continue to work on the same basis rates of wages as existed under the scale?—Yes; but we could not.

3161. You refused?—Yes.

3162. Did you refuse because of the lower prices you were obtaining being such as not to justify you in continuing the rates paid for the preceding November three months?—In point of fact we found we could not work the collieries on that sliding scale, that the relief obtained from the wages was not sufficient.

3163. But you had worked it for some time previously?—Yes, but at a very considerable loss.

3164. And now you are in favour of a sliding scale?—Yes, I am.

3165. And you think that it is possible for you to arrive at a basis that will be satisfactory?—I think it is quite possible.

3166. What principle would you adopt?—The principle that I should adopt is that which we have heretofore adopted. Take, for instance, the scale of 1887, when it was 4*s.* 1*d.*; we should then want a reduction of 18¾*d.*

3167. How long was the 1886 scale in operation?—It was in operation for three years.

3168. I want to know how you are going to overcome the difficulty of obtaining a fair basis for a scale. You say that the scale which was terminated at the end of 1886 was too high, but it had been in existence for three years. I can fully agree with you that the men will not believe you if you tell them that you are losing, and they might think a certain rate was not a fair one, and you might argue that it is fair; and I want to know, referring to your deadlock with regard to the sliding scale, how you are going to settle the basis?—In that case we

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

adopted another scale. We had that very question arise which you name, and we formed and made another scale in the year 1887.

3169. But the men are not satisfied with it?—The men afterwards gave notice to terminate it.

3170. Now you want one that will be satisfactory to both parties; but who is to fix the basis?—They worked a year and a half upon that scale.

3171. I want to know who would fix the basis—I am in favour of a scale?—Of course, it may be necessary to have a committee on each side to make arrangements from time to time. I do not say there may not be a difficulty in arranging the basis, but it is possible to work it, and we have had proof of this in Northumberland, and I believe it is proved in South Wales, too. There are occasions when a sliding scale will not give satisfaction to the men as well as to the owners.

3172. Doubtless there are. But the owners meet, and they decide on a certain basis as the only one they can accept, and the representatives from the men come with instructions that they are not to accept that; then, who steps in. We have had these difficulties, and we have overcome them, and I want to know what steps you are going to take to overcome the difficulty?—We have agreed so far, as you have heard today. It has been recently put before the Owners' Association as to whether we should have a wage committee, which practically means to some extent, no doubt—to a great extent, in fact—a sliding scale committee, and we say we are prepared to accept that suggestion, and to endeavour to make an arrangement which will be satisfactory. I do not see myself that there will be any impossibility in making a basis upon which a sliding scale can be drawn up. On three occasions before we succeeded in doing so, and why should we not succeed in the future?

3173. We have succeeded in three or four cases, but we have failed in one, and then we had to appeal to someone else?—Are you alluding to having an umpire?

3174. Yes. If your negotiations fail, and you come to a deadlock, I want to know how you are going to get out of it?—We might be compelled ultimately to go to outside aid.

Mr. *Abraham*.

3175. When was it you first became connected with the Northumberland coal trade?—I have been connected with it all my life, in fact, I succeeded to the collieries on the death of my father in 1859, but I was connected with him in carrying on the business for some years before that.

3176. Could you historically give us the date when the hours for boys were first fixed in the district. We had it as 1859, from Mr. Weeks, but perhaps you could remember further back?—No, I could not speak of earlier than that.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

The double shift system has gone on since the beginning of the century.

3177. Would the hours of the boys and young persons, up to 21, date as far back also?—I should think so. The hours of labour were very long, I believe, 40 or 50 years ago; very much longer than they have been ever since I was connected with the coal trade. I do not know whether at that time the boys may not have worked longer hours than they did in the year 1859.

3178. Longer than the 12½ hours?—I am not sure; I am not prepared to say upon that point; I know the men worked longer.

3179. Do you agree with Mr. Weeks that you have had a greater difficulty in finding boys under 16 than young persons between 16 and 21?—I have no doubt Mr. Weeks speaks with authority. I have not the advantage of living in the district where my own collieries are, but Mr. Weeks, at Bedlington, is in the midst of his own collieries and therefore knows absolutely the facts that he speaks about. He is the viewer of the colliery also.

3180. Then, of course, the same would be the answer if I were to ask you whether, in your opinion, the difficulty of finding boys and young persons is the chief objection to reducing their hours?—I am told so.

3181. You were told so?—Yes, and I believe it to be so.

3182. If you could get a sufficient number of boys that difficulty would be removed?—No doubt it would.

3183. Would you object to reduce their hours then?—If I found that by reducing the hours, through an altered state of circumstances, mining could be carried on profitably, I would not; but it entirely depends as to whether it could or could not be. You must know that the mining industries, until three years ago, or two-and-a-half years ago possibly, were deplorably dull in all parts of England.

3184. If you could command a sufficient number of the boys and young persons, the economic question, the question of cost, would still have a bearing with you in reducing the hours?—Yes, very much.

3185. Is that not the principal difficulty considered?—Yes; at least it is a difficulty that I have considered, and no doubt others too.

3186. Do you recollect a deputation of the representatives of the miners asking your Association, which I believe you were chairman of then, to concede a reduction of hours to all men and boys?—Is that the eight hours that you are alluding to?

3187. Yes, the eight hours?—"On the 19th of "December, in 1887, the men requested that "eight hours in the 24 be the maximum day's "work for all persons employed underground "where the single shift, and seven hours where "the double shift is worked; the time to be "reckoned from bank to bank. On the 21st "January 1888, Mr. Burt and deputation "attended; at the outset chairman stated that "the owners could not accede to the request. "Some conversation ensued on the points raised

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

"but the deputation did not press the request." I remember that; that is an extract from the minutes of the meeting that took place.

3187*a*. Do you remember the answer given?—"The Chairman stated that the owners could not accede to the request."

3188. Then where it is reported that the Chairman said that they could only give a decided negative to the request would probably not be entirely correct, would it?—I think I was Chairman of the meeting on that occasion.

3189. I think so too?—We have not the absolute words spoken on that occasion given. It is only given indefinitely that the Chairman declined to accede to the request; that some conversation ensued on the points raised, but the deputation did not press the request. I have read from a copy of our minutes.

3190. Had the men pressed their demand for it what would have been the result?—Well, we could not accede, you know.

3191. Would you have been as decided in closing the collieries then as you were when they could not see their way clear to accept a reduction in 1887?—I should think so; in fact this request was first made on the 19th of December 1887.

3192. Then if they had pressed their claim it would have resulted in a strike?—I should fancy it would.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

3193. I should like to return for one moment to the question of a wage committee which is now under consideration. Mr. Weeks told us that the Association objected to an umpire being attached to such a committee?—Yes.

3194. Would you mind stating again what are the objections on the part of the employers to an appointment of an umpire?—We did not wish to have any outside pressure brought into connexion with our trade; we preferred to manage it ourselves.

3195. But that is only stating that you do object to an umpire: could you tell me more exactly what are the reasons for your objection?—Simply this, that we did not wish to have strangers, as it were, brought in to advise, and, in fact, to decide on matters that would come before us.

3196. Supposing the men insisted on their side upon having an umpire attached to such a body, would you regard that as an absolutely fatal objection?—It was only considered some fortnight ago.

Chairman.

3197. I am not sure, as the matter is a pending negotiation, that we ought to press this either on one side or the other?—This matter was only brought before us about three weeks since and we declined. We accepted the suggestion of the wage committee, but we could not see our way to accept the appointment of an umpire. The regulations of this committee as to how they

Chairman—continued.

will act in settling wages or in making a basis of price upon which to settle the wages—all remain for the future to settle. No doubt there might be a difficulty, as we all see, arise. If, when the committee, which will consist of so many, say nine on each side, is formed, the nine owners take one side and the nine miners take another there will then be a deadlock, which we shall have to get out of in some form or other.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

3198. Would not the appointment of an umpire be the most convenient way of getting out of it?—Possibly we might under certain circumstances and in special cases, be forced to have one.

Mr. *Tait.*

3199. How long has your Association been in existence?—I think since the year 1864 on the present basis. We have altered the rules, I may say, though occasionally. There were alterations some three years since of an important character. I may say that the coalowners for a great number of years—in fact long before I was connected with the trade—have met from time to time, but with reference to commercial matters. I think the Association commenced about the year 1864.

3200. What I wanted to get at is this. Is it within your experience that since your Association was formed and met from time to time the representatives of the Miners' Association, the relationships existing between yourselves and your *employés* have been better?—Yes, I think so undoubtedly. Matters have been conducted with more regularity. I do not think there had been a great strike in Northumberland—any general strike—for many years before our Association was formed. 1844 was the date of the general strike. The Association itself was not formed owing to that strike. There had been strikes at large collieries in the years 1864 and 1865.

3201. You became a colliery proprietor in 1859?—Yes.

3202. Can you remember the hours which your miners were working then?—I think they worked eight hours.

(Mr. *Weeks.*) In the county of Durham they worked eight hours in the whole and about seven hours in the broken.

(Mr. *Tait.*) Can you tell us what were the hours in the county of Northumberland?

(Mr. *Weeks.*) I cannot speak of the county of Northumberland.

(*Chairman.*) Are you speaking of the face?

(Mr. *Weeks.*) No, sir, from bank to bank. In the county of Durham in 1859 it was 8 hours in the whole and 7¼, I think, in the broken.

Mr. *Tait.*

3203. (*To the witness.*) Between the periods of 1859 and 1872, what were the hours that the miners were working?—I think they worked 8 hours.

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

3204. I think the statement has been made here by the miners' representatives that during that period they were working about 10 hours?—In Northumberland?

3205. Yes. The statement was made here by Mr. Weeks, and you have accepted his statement as being correct, that in 1859 the boys' labour was 12¼ hours per day; and that in 1871, by the approachment of the men's Union, it was reduced from 12 to 11, and that a certain legislative restriction in 1872 brought a certain number down to 10, but did not interfere with what is called "young persons" in the Act,—those between 16 and 21. After the passing of the Act, Mr. Weeks says that certain managers and proprietors in Northumberland were desirous of getting these young persons, as they are called, to work between 10 and 11 hours; now were there any overtures from these young persons themselves to work longer hours?—I should think not. I do not remember that that was so.

3206. Therefore, if there has been an attempt made to lengthen the hours of these young people, it can be laid at the door of the managers and the colliery proprietors?—Yes.

3207. From 1872 up to 1891, it was a recognised fact that while the law restricted those under 16 to work only 54 hours per week, you had the power to make those between 16 and 21 who were doing heavier work, work 11 hours per day?—Yes, from 1879.

3208. Now regarding the question of arbitration; the fact of your being an Association, I suppose, will show that you accept arbitration as being a fair and proper means of settling any dispute that may arise?—Yes.

3209. Mr. Burt in putting the question to Mr. Weeks drew from him that never in the experience of your Association had the leaders of the Northumberland miners made a promise to that Association but what they had fulfilled it, and that what they had promised had been carried out by the men?—That is so.

3210. Yet notwithstanding that the coal-owners refused to again place their confidence in these men, believing as they say, and as Mr. Weeks rather has said, that they had broken loose from their executive committee. Do you hold that opinion also?—Yes, it is the fact that they had; the executive committee resigned in point of fact.

3211. The executive committee resigned after these negotiations were going on. I am referring to the time when negotiations were going on. Can you give us the basis of your reasons for saying that previous to the strike the men would not be directed or governed by the suggestions from their representatives?—I do not say that the men have not, generally speaking, been reasonable, but undoubtedly at certain periods that come within my knowledge, they have not accepted advice, whether it came from the outside public, the owners, or their own representatives. We found at that period that we must have a considerable reduction in wages, and that it was essential for us to obtain it.

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

3212. Yes, but the point is this that I want to get at: Why is it that when you make up your mind and say that you must have a reduction in wages you refuse to submit your case to arbitration, while on the other hand, when the men may think differently and ask you to submit the question to arbitration you do so, and they submit to whatever may be the decision; why cannot you reciprocate that feeling?—On several occasions we have, when we thought the circumstances required it, gone to arbitration. There have been, I should think, no less than five important occasions when we have had arbitration. Arbitration in the case of collieries is a very costly and a very long process.

3213. In dealing with the sliding scale, do I take it that you agree to fixed periods for that scale, say to five or six or ten years, whatever the case may be?—I should think ten years is far too long because the circumstances alter so much.

3214. But do you agree to a definite period for the scale being fixed and sustained, say, for two or three years, or whatever it may be?—My own view would be that two years would be sufficient. I do not think you can see in advance further than that.

3215. Could you not accept the principle of arbitration upon the same lines?—No, I do not think I would.

3216. The hours of the Northumberland miners, just now, are about seven or seven-and-a-half from bank to bank, are they not?—Seven-and-a-quarter, I think.

3217. Are you aware that the miners of this country have been agitating for an eight hours day by legislative enactment?—An eight hours day?

3218. Well, an Eight Hours' Bill?—Yes.

3219. What logical reason can there be for colliery proprietors, whose men are only working seven-and-a-quarter hours, to take any objection to the eight hours?—In my opinion it is this: We found that for some 10 to 12 years the collieries in Northumberland, speaking for almost all, but, I believe, not absolutely all, ceased to be profitable, and, had the hours been altered by legislation, we should absolutely have been ruined, or, at least, if not ruined, we should have had to bring into the collieries a very large capital, greater than we had. Certain collieries with which I myself have been connected were, at that period with a very large capital, indeed, for from 12 to 14 years unremunerative, and had there been eight hours, I have no doubt that, instead of continuing these collieries—they have been worked profitably now during the last three years—we should have closed them, and they would have been driven out of the coal trade.

3220. Do the Northumberland colliery proprietors compete very greatly with Scotch colliery proprietors?—We compete with all persons producing coal, whether in Scotland or in Wales. I should say that our great

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

competitors in the steam coal trade are more the Welsh coalowners.

3221. But it is a fact, all the same, that you have in Scotland strong competititors for the class of coal which you have in Northumberland?—Yes, particularly for the north of Europe—a very great competition.

3222. In Scotland there are men working, hewing coal, to-day from 8 to 11 hours per day; do you not think that, if you had a legislative eight hours day, you would regulate competition better in your own interest?—Do you mean to say that, by restricting the quantity of coals produced, you would raise the price?

3223. The hours worked, not the quantity produced?—If you restricted the hours, say one hour, of course you would restrict the output of coal very materially.

3224. Certainly?—It might benefit us in that way, but we should have no certainty that foreign coal would not be produced to a greater extent than it now is, and that we should get competition there.

3225. What I was wishing to draw from you is this: Do you think it would regulate competition better by having a universal day's work, instead of one colliery proprietor working his mine 11 or 10 hours per day, as against another working seven or eight?—Any benefit we should get we should lose by the boys' hours being shortened.

3226. By the boys' hours being shortened?—Yes. I am quite satisfied that if you did succeed in England in getting an Eight Hours' Bill you would have to reckon with an enormous increase of production abroad in coal and with the conditions under which that coal can be worked. There has been an enormous increase of production in Germany during the last 10 years. Another reason would be that the cost of coal to the manufacturers would be serious. In the north of England a large number of manufactories have been put down owing to their being able to obtain cheap coal. It would be very detrimental to them, of course, if they found, through the shortening of the hours, that the quantity of coal produced fell off, because the prices must go up.

Chairman.

3227. The question of increasing the cost of coal is not merely a question as between one producing district and another, but it may also be a question of the consuming industries?—As well; and also you have to reckon, as I said before, with foreign countries.

Mr. *Mann.*

3228. From the early part of your evidence I understood that the principal difficulty in connexion with reducing the working hours of the boys was due to the fact that there were two shifts of hewers and only one of boys?—Yes, that is so.

3229–39. The two shifts of hewers run to about 14½ hours, do not they?—14½ from bank to bank.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

3240. And the boys' hours are 10?—Yes.

3241. Supposing the working hours of the hewers were reduced to six per shift, thus knocking off two-and-a-half hours from the double shift, would there then be any material difficulty in reducing proportionately the working hours of the boys?—It would be impossible to hew the coals in the six hours.

3242. I wanted to understand where the especial difficulty in connexion with Northumberland came in, because I understood you to say that you had consulted experts in the matter, and they were unanimously of opinion that it could not be done?—I mean to say that in our Association we have the advantage of having the viewers always present—many of them are coalowners themselves, others are not—and I never have yet met one who stated that it could be done.

3243. Of course we have the arguments from other districts that it could not be done without increasing the cost of production and, if Northumberland is on exactly the same basis, it is a comparatively easy matter to understand it. But it is stated, and I understood you to defend it, that there is some especial difficulty in connexion with Northumberland, and it would appear to me that if the hours of the hewers are reduced in the manner indicated, then there would be little difficulty in reducing the working hours of the boys proportionately, and, inasmuch as other coal producing districts are contemplating a reduction in the working hours, then it is only reasonable to suppose that Northumberland would be also able to reduce proportionately, and therefore, the whole of the country would be placed practically upon the same basis?—I do not think it would follow, because in Northumberland and in Durham we have what is known as the double shift system, whereas in other parts of the country it does not exist.

3244. I quite understand, but the double shift system does not seem to me to give any special difficulty?—In other districts they will be working eight hours, and in Northumberland the men would be only working the six.

3245. I understand, but in other districts they are now working more than eight hours, and in Northumberland they are working less than eight hours, yet Northumberland is successfully competing with other districts. Now, if other districts reduced their working hours, and I will presume proportionately reduced their output, what would there then be in the way of Northumberland making a similar reduction in its working hours?—I do not know exactly the advantages and disadvantages of other districts which have different seams. In Northumberland we have thin seams of coal, and it would be impossible, I think, at low rates of wages for the men to live if you reduce the hours below what they are now. The earnings of the men were, comparatively speaking, very low until three years ago.

3246. Then you are not prepared to say that there is any exceptional difficulty with regard to the double shift of hewers and the single shift

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

of boys. If other districts can stand a reduction and insist upon a reduction, and actually bring one about, then there is no exceptional difficulty in bringing about a proportionate reduction in Northumberland, is there?—It might be brought about, but I think it would be very detrimental, both to the owners and to the men themselves.

3247. But, on the same lines, would it not be detrimental to the owners in other districts if they had to put up with the reduction?—I think that if the coal seams are high in other districts, and they can, produce more tons of coal per man than we can, the difficulty would not exist with them in the same way.

3248. Do they produce more tons of coal per man now, do you know?—I think in Northumberland the production would be something like 3 tons of coal per man, but I do not know that I could give you what it is in Wales.

Mr. *Tom Mann*—continued.

3249. I believe that it is medium in Northumberland, that there are places where they produce more, and that there are places where they produce less, but in any case, competition is going on, and Northumberland successfully holds its own. Now, I wanted to understand whether,—when you stated that it was the opinion of experts that there could not be such a reduction of the working hours of the boys as to bring about anything approaching uniformity which should include a maximum working day for boys of eight hours; there was some exceptional difficulty with regard to the working of the coalfield in Northumberland, I thought there was, but there does not appear to be any exceptional difficulty; it is simply a matter of probable increased cost; but, inasmuch as that applies all round, then the matter falls, and Northumberland is on the same footing as other counties?—I do not quite see it in the same way that you do.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. John George Weeks re-called, and further examined.

Mr. *Tait.*

3250. I should like to ask what is your experience, as a mining engineer, of the results of the Government of this country appointing inspectors taken from the ranks of practical workmen. Do you think that has conduced to the lessening of accidents in any way, and to the benefit of both employer and *employé*?—The employment of Government Inspectors as a whole, do you mean?

3251. As a whole—the effect of the inspection of mines?—It has never made the slightest difference, as far as my own experience as a mining engineer goes. It has never caused me to alter a little bit one way or the other, whether there was a mining inspector or whether there was not.

3252. I do not say that?—I think that is the experience of the whole of the North of England. I do not think that the putting in of Government Inspectors has affected the question of the loss of life so far as the mines of Northumberland and Durham are concerned.

Mr. *Abraham.*

3253. Did I understand you to say that the men were working seven and-a-half hours from bank to bank?—Yes, I can best put it in this way: The fore shift goes down at half-past three, the last shift rides at five at night.

3254. There is a little difference between you and Mr. Lamb; he puts it at seven-and-a-quarter. The point is this:—When you said that they were working seven-and-a-half, you then argued, did you not, that the boys were only working two-and-a-half hours more than the men?—Yes.

3255. So that if Mr. Lamb is right with seven-and-a-quarter, the boys are working two-and-three-quarter hours longer than the men?

Mr. *Abraham.*

—The time varies at collieries according to the distance that the working place is from the shaft. The men change always in the working face. Now, the back shift goes down at a quarter to ten, the fore shift men, who go down at half-past three, do not perhaps get out until a quarter-past eleven; that is, perhaps, in some cases as much as seven-and-three-quarter hours or seven-and-a-half hours. The back shift, as I have said, goes down at a quarter to ten, and they are always out at five o'clock. The back shift is never more than seven-and-a quarter hours, the fore shift runs about seven-and-a-half hours. The average probably is about seven hours and twenty-three or twenty-four minutes, but we generally speak of it as seven-and-a-half hours and seven hours. The short shift is seven hours, and the long shift seven-and-a-half hours.

3256. Previous to the reduction of the one hour, which was effected this year, do you remember what proportion of the collieries were working 11 hours as compared with those that were working 10, or otherwise?—The boys.

3257. You had collieries called 11-hour collieries and others called 10-hour collieries?—That is so—drawing coals—and some 10½. I could give you the proportion roughly; I should think, probably, one-third of each. It is merely a guess offhand, but I should say probably one-third of each. One that I am connected with never worked more than the 10 hours, but the other collieries, four of them, worked 10½ hours. There were collieries—some of Mr. Lamb's collieries—I know which worked 11 hours, and the adjoining colliery was also worked 11 hours; I should say about one-third of each. One of my own pits never drew more than 10 hours; the other four 10½.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. GEORGE JAQUES called and examined.

Chairman.

3258. You have not, I think, sent in a formal summary of the evidence that you propose to give, but, on the 24th of July you addressed a letter to one of the Secretaries of the Commission, expressing a desire to give evidence on certain points, chiefly, I think, in connexion with the feasibility and desirability of a limitation of the hours of labour by legislative enactment?—That is it.

3259. I am, therefore, not able to address to you a series of questions founded on your own sketch of the questions you desire to have put, but I rather invite you now just to make your own statement?—I may say that I have been very anxious to assist the general movement in favour of the reduction of the working hours either by legislative enactment or by any other means that can be used or adopted.

3260. Perhaps I ought, myself, to have elicited from you, in the first instance, what you are?——I am a coal-miner, working at the Walker Colliery, in the county of Northumberland.

3261. Have you worked as a coal miner for many years?—Yes. I am now 46 years of age. I commenced to work in the mines when I was between 10 and 11.

3262. In Northumberland?—No; I commenced in the county of Durham.

3263. You began to work in the coal mines in the north of England, really in the county of Durham, between 10 and 11 years of age?—Yes.

3264. You are now working as a miner in Northumberland?—Exactly.

3265. How many years have you been a hewer?—I think, on the whole, I have hewed coals for 12 or 14 years. I may say I have not hewed coals all the time, but I was for a considerable time a deputy overman. Before that time I was what you might term an assistant to the deputy overman—what they call a timber leader, or a plate-layer they call it at some collieries. It is almost like serving your time to be a deputy overman. I was transferred from that to the position of deputy overman whilst still at work in the county of Durham, and I was holding that position as a deputy overman when the Mines Regulation Act came in force in 1872, and as being one who was then in the service I received a certificate of competency as a deputy overman.

3266. Then when did you go to work in Northumberland as a hewer?—I came into the county I think in the year 1884. I came from the county of Durham to the particular place named Elswick Colliery.

3267. That is seven years ago?—Yes.

3268. And you then commenced work in Northumberland as a hewer?—Yes, I commenced at the Elswick Colliery.

3269. And at one colliery or another in Northumberland you have, since 1884, worked as a hewer?—Not exactly. I have not been one this last year-and-a-half; I might say for about a year-and-a-half or two years. I have been working at night time as a shifter, I am not at present a coal hewer.

Chairman—continued.

3270. That being the nature of your experience, what do you desire to state to this Commission. Would you tell us how far the views you express are your own views, and how far they are the views of any considerable number who may have deputed you to speak for them?—I might say that I am not actually deputed, because the class of people that I desire to speak in the interest of here to-day, I may say a very considerable number of them, have not the means of deputing anybody. By that I mean I am here to speak in the interest of the boys and young men of the county of Northumberland, and I may say what applies to Northumberland would apply to Durham. I think that a very large majority of those are recognised in our Associations as what we term half-members; they pay half the contribution into our Associations.

3271. By reason of age?—Yes, and consequently being half members they are not entitled to vote at our meetings, and not being entitled to vote they take no interest in the meetings. Simply they are maturing themselves to become full members when age arrives. It is in the interest of those that I desire to come here to give evidence to-day.

3272. Will you proceed to state the views you wish to lay before us?—As I have already said, I am very desirous that the youth of the age in which I am living should have better facilities and opportunities of acquiring information mentally, and so cultivating their minds; and I consider that the shorter the time that a young man or a boy is employed in a mine, whether his work be light or whether it be hard, the better for him. The very fact of being confined in regions below, I think it is feasible to suppose, will be more detrimental to his health than favourable to it. Although we have had evidence given here to-day of a certain doctor saying that it does not affect their health at all, yet I think that if they had more sunshine and more recreation above ground there would be a tendency for them to be more healthy. Not only that, but, as a member of the Northumberland Miners' Association, I am not at all satisfied with the efforts the Association—I will not say have made—but I am not satisfied with the efforts that they ought to have made. I have here a copy of the rules, and I see it is recorded on the wrapper of those rules that the Association, of which I am a member, was established in January 1863. I find, when I open the wrapper and look into it, on the first page, that the primary object of the formation of the Association—it is marked with the letter B.—"is to "shorten the hours of labour of boys in mines "to eight hours per day." Consequently I hold the opinion that when the Association was formed it was formed with that avowed object to limit the labour of the boys in the mines to eight hours per day. I

Chairman—continued.

can scarcely conceive it possible that the men who framed this constitution would do such a thing as that unless they saw some possibility or probability of its being put into effect. I may say, probably, that having taken up this cause I have endeavoured to sift and to obtain information. I may say that my own father was a Northumberland miner before me, and I had it from his own lips—he is dead and gone now, poor fellow—but I had it from his own lips before he did die, that he was an active miner in the interests of the working-men in what is known as the 1844 strike. He was a committeeman located at a colliery named West Moor, and frequently had to preside at meetings, both of the general body of the men when they were assembled, and committee meetings. I think he was pretty likely to give a correct report of the transactions and the results of that strike. I have heard him say that if there was no other good result came from it, there was this good result came, that it established a twelve hour day for the boys. That is the testimony of my own father who was a coal-miner in Northumberland in the year 1844. Moreover than that, he said that when he was a boy working in the coal mines, my grandfather — his father — usually carried him on his back to the pit in the morning between two and three o'clock and saw him sent down—there were no cages then; they rode in what was termed a loop—they went up and down the pit in corves and in loops. He was put into the care of another man going down, and his father had to go on the pit top and wait for him coming up again and carry him home. His experience was that he never saw daylight from Sunday to Sunday for many and many a week. They were so poor in this world's goods that the shoes that he worked in on Saturday were frequently greased with candle grease to be put on on Sunday morning in which he had to go to the Sabbath school. Now this state of things, I think, is certainly a worse state of things than they have at the present time, but I only quote this as some sort of starting-point when a fixed hour was made for the boys. Before that time my father's experience was this, that the boys had to work and get out the coals as long as ever there were coals to get; so long as the hewers would hew the boys had to remain and get out the coals; there was no limitation of hours; they sometimes might be 10, but sometimes might be 12, sometimes 14, and sometimes 16. I say that one reason why I have taken up this cause is because I was not satisfied with the efforts that the Association in these 28½ years ought to have made to carry out that object for which the Association was formed. In addition to this, I may say that I have endeavoured since Mr. Burnett informed me that my evidence would be accepted here—I may say the time has only been short and I have other things to do so that I have not full time to give to it, but I have gone into what I may term the records of the minutes of the various meetings of the

Chairman—continued.

Association and I say that my experience and the information I have collected goes to this effect, that the Northumberland miners, as a collective body, are not opposed to a shortening of the hours of the boys. I think that there are a few of the intelligent leaders—whether they do it from political principles or what not I am not prepared to say; but they seem to have set themselves in opposition to what I look upon as a general movement, and I think that it is only like standing in the way of the waves of the sea and that they will have to stand back or be drowned if they do not get out of the way soon. I think that when they try to make the impression upon anyone or to help anyone to form the opinion that Northumberland county, as a county and a body of miners, is opposed to an Eight Hours' Bill for boys, they are doing so on purely hypothetical grounds, because I have been looking into the records and I have been collecting some data.

3273. Perhaps it would be convenient if you could make it clear whether you are speaking of an opposition to an eight hours day or of an opposition to a legislative eight hours day?—As I said before, I am quite in favour of it and I am very desirous——

3274-5. I mean rather in criticising the attitude which you think is taken up by others that I do not think you have made it quite clear whether you were imputing to them an objection in itself to a limitation of the hours of boys to eight by arrangement, if that were feasible; or whether you were imputing to them simply an objection to a legislative limitation?—I believe that the leading men in this county that I have referred to are not opposed to what I may term an eight hours labour day, but they are opposed to an Eight Hours' Labour Bill. In that position they are opposing me, but I am not opposing them. If they will set the machinery of the Union at work to get an eight hours Bill, I will assist them. What I want is an eight hours day, got by hook or by crook, so long as it is got; but then, from what I have collected, I find this: that on September 21st in the year 1888, our friend Mr. Burt, with some of his colleagues, presented themselves before the coal owners of the county of Northumberland, and made this request: That a resolution which had been passed by a conference held at Edinburgh some time previously might be put into effect in this county of Northumberland, and that was that eight hours should be the maximum hours of labour in all mines and for all persons where the single shift was worked, and seven hours where the double shift was worked. There were a few other things. Besides the eight hours' day they wanted a five days' week. I believe there were two or three more bits of things that they requested; but Mr. R. O. Lamb, the chairman of the owners' meeting of that day refused. What we have recorded in our minutes is to this effect: that he could only say on behalf of the owners that they must give a decided

Chairman—continued.

negative. Those are the correct words from the printed record of the minutes. Of course, I heard Mr. R. O. Lamb here, and he seemed to qualify the thing, but those are the words we have in our printed minutes—"a decided negative." Consequently, on that ground I came to this conclusion. If the men had said: "Well, we have asked you politely for it and "you won't concede it; we will take steps to "enforce it," that would have meant that unless the owners would agree, the men would strike for it. Now the thing narrows itself down to this point, with me. If an eight hours day is to be got, can it be got by any other means than a strike or a law? In my opinion it cannot. The owners have been asked to concede it, and they will not, and, because they will not, my impression is that our Association cannot enforce it. And I know something about the miseries of a strike. I was in the strike that we had during the year 1887, and I can assure you it brought me to a very keen sense of hardship; I was brought to a very low state in my finances; in fact, I was brought to such a state—I do not say it here to sound my praises in any shape or form; but I went out of the house one morning without breakfast, and I was not able to break my fast till the second day following, and neither were my wife nor children. I know something about the hardships of a miners' strike. That is not the only one I have been in; I have been in others, locally, before that. And I say, if it has to come, and we are to choose whether we are to have it by means of a strike or by means of a law, by all means I think the law is most preferable, because I think it can be got by a law without any striking. And not only on that ground, but I have endeavoured to ask myself the question, and to answer it as well as I was able: If an eight hours Bill was passed, would it be an advantage or a disadvantage to me as an individual and to the county I belong to as a whole? In my own humble opinion I think it will be a decided gain to us. And I may say further, before I go into any further remarks on this subject, my own candid opinion is this: that the men who are supposed to oppose us do so from a mere selfish point of view. I may say that we do not receive any opposition from anybody but those who hew coals, or that do not work in the pits at all, or, if there are any pitmen who oppose it, they are coal-hewers. I would like that to be particularly noted. What opposition we have received in Northumberland has come from those who never descend a pit, or those who do descend and who are hewing coals.

3276. Those hewing coals are the large majority of the persons employed?—Yes, I quite agree to that. The numbers that they represent, according to the last census we had of the mining industry, is something like 11,840, I think. I have come to this conclusion, that if an eight hours' day was procured, either by negotiations or by a law (but I would prefer it being got by a law), instead of it being a disadvantage to us it would be a decided gain; because I contend this: The hours of the surface-hands, banksmen, screeners, branch horse-drivers, and those working at and around the pit-head are regulated by the hours that the pit draws coals. Consequently, if the drawing hours of coals were reduced, their hours would be reduced as well. I have got together the number of persons employed below ground who work 10 hours a day, and I may say that it is only recently that it became 10 hours. I have a letter before me here which I have received from Mr. Ralph Young in the early part of the year in reply to a letter that I wrote to him asking if he could give me any information as to the number of boys working in Northumberland mines who work 10, and the number who work 11 hours, or if he could not give me the exact number of boys as individuals, could he give me the number of collieries in the county which work 10 hours a day, and which work 11 hours a day. I have it before me here that five-sixths of the steam coal collieries in Northumberland at that time were considered as 11 hours pits. The date of that is February 16th, 1891. There are some adults underground who work 10 hours a day, and 11 hours when the pits are drawing coals 11 hours; that is, I mean, the onsetters and the rolleyway men, and what I may term putters and hewers, they have been accustomed to go in with the boys and ascend at night with the boys as well. When I add the one to the other we get a total, according to the last returns I was able to get hold of, of 9,300 odd, who work in and about Northumberland mines over 10 hours a day.

3277. Including surface men?—Including surface men. Of course I expect that if a Bill should be passed it will affect them as well as underground men, because their hours are practically fixed and regulated by the hours of the boys, who work now 10 hours a day. Then I say that, looking at the hewers as 11,000 odd, and the boys and surface men as 9,000 odd, if even it should be that an Eight Hours' Bill should cause the employers to make the hewers work eight hours, we may say each of these hewers will have an hour a day put on to them: that is 11,000 odd, taking two off each of the others, multiplying the 9,300 odd by 2, it gives a total of 18,600. So, while we allow the owners to take 11,000 hours off, we get 18,000 for it. Consequently, looking at the thing from a common standpoint as affecting the county generally, I think it is a decided gain to us as a county.

3278. You have stated that your chief concern, and that which really moved you to activity in the matter was a strong feeling that the hours of boys—and perhaps you may even have considered men—underground, should be shortened?—Yes.

3279. Therefore it would be convenient, perhaps, as you are giving statistics, to know what is the number of men or boys employed underground in Northumberland for more than eight hours from bank to bank?—I may say that I

Chairman—continued.

wrote to Mr. Hedley, the Chief Inspector of the Northumberland mining district, and asked him to be good enough to supply me with figures under the following heads: First, the number of men and boys engaged in getting minerals and the average number of hours per day that they work from bank to bank. The number of coal-getters in Northumberland is 11,840, and from his return their hours are 7·8. The second item that I asked him to supply me with information on was this: the number of men and boys engaged in conveying minerals from the face to the shaft, that includes the putters, drivers, rolleyway men, on-setters, and such like. The number of persons that he gives me is 4,745.

3280. Those are all single shift men?—Yes. Their average number of hours from bank to bank is 10·13. Now, there are a number of workers underground not included in those above, their number is 6,481, and the average number of hours that they work from bank to bank is 8·2. The number of persons altogether employed below ground is 23,066. I asked him also if he would let me know the number of men and boys employed at and about the pit heads above ground, and also the number of hours a day that they worked. The total number of persons employed above ground is 4,648. The average number of hours a day that they work (of course, I could not say from bank to bank) is 9·34. The number of boys under 16 years of age (these are a class of boys whose hours are regulated by the Mines Act) is, in the Northumberland coal mines, 2,312.

3281. They are part of the 4,745?—Yes, I was going to say so. The number of boys employed above ground is 694. According to the Parliamentary Return that I made some effort to get here (I got this from Mr. Bell, the Government Inspector of the Durham District), at the time when this was made out, the total number of persons employed about the Northumberland coal mines was 27,000; but Mr. Hedley's latest figures here are 30,041, that is including all, above ground and below ground. Then, having shown that I think a Bill is most preferable, because I think we cannot get a shorter working day, at least an eight hours working day, without some serious struggle, I may say I also find that the miners in the year 1887 had the question brought before them on two separate occasions. On each of these occasions at the delegate meetings the resolution in favour of an eight hours day was carried by overwhelming majorities; and I also find that the question was again brought before the lodge a few times, I do not know exactly how many now; but at delegate meetings and through executive committee minutes being sent out to them recommending them one way and another, in the years 1887 and 1888, whenever the question was broached or discussed or voted upon, it was carried by overwhelming majorities.

Mr. *Balfour.*

3282. You are speaking of the miners of Northumberland at present?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt.*

3283. You said that this had been repeatedly brought before the men, and carried by overwhelming majorities. Will you give us the dates of some of these meetings at which it was carried—I mean after 1887?—In the year 1888 at a delegate meeting held on February 18th we had the following resolution voted on: the resolution stands No. 13 on the programme; it came from a colliery known by the name of the Dudley Colliery, which was at that time the second largest colliery in the entire county: it had then 497 full members and 103 half-members. The resolution reads as follows: "That eight hours work in the 24 be the "maximum day's work for all persons employed "underground where a single shift, and seven "hours where a double shift is worked, the "time to be reckoned from bank to bank." For this resolution 131 delegates' votes were given, and against it 83. Again, in the year 1888, we have a copy of the circular sent out to the county informing the branches about an interview with the Steam Colliery Owners' Association—I have referred to that already I think—that is about Mr. Lamb giving a "decided negative" to their request. Those are the only two times that I can find that these matters had been brought before the Association in 1888; but I may say that we have the question here frequently brought before us in these two years 1887 and 1888, and every time it is voted on there are overwhelming majorities in its favour. Another feature we have to notice is the fact that on each occasion that the question is raised it is raised by one or other of the very largest collieries in the county. And again, in these two years 1887 and 1888, we have two very important illustrations of the inability to obtain a shorter working day by Trade Union effort, which I may say is the pet theory of our respected friend Mr. Burt here, and his colleagues Messrs. Fenwick, Ralph Young, Boyle, Straker, and one or two more. The two illustrations I refer to are the ignominious defeat that we suffered in the 17 weeks' strike, and also the other local strikes that were engaged in. It is quite evident to me that when the employers make up their minds that a demand shall be enforced, or that a request of ours shall not be granted, we have a very poor chance of succeeding. I do not know whether we need go any further into this matter or not. I may say I have endeavoured to pursue my investigations still further, and I come to 1889. This is when I find, to use a sort of common expression, the tide seems to turn against us. In 1889, at the delegate meeting held on May 18th, a resolution was sent from Ashington Colliery; and although they had succeeded in carrying resolutions previous to this in favour of a shorter working day and a limitation to eight hours a day, what happened was this: The resolution that they sent this time reads as follows: "In order to ascertain the true vote "of the county on the eight hours and five "days a week question, a ballot paper be issued "by the board to the county, and that each "lodge be requested to take a ballot on this

EIGHTH DAY.

Commission Room, Westminster Hall, Wednesday, 28th October 1891.

PRESENT:

MR. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

The Right Hon. H. H. FOWLER, M.P.
Sir EDWARD HARLAND, Bart., M.P.
Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. W. ABRAHAM, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Sir WM. LEWIS.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.
Mr. E. TROW.
Mr. TOM MANN and Mr. H. TAIT (Group B.) and Sir J. E. GORST, Q.C., M.P., and Mr. M. AUSTIN (Group C.), also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Secretaries.

Mr. GEORGE JAQUES recalled and further examined.

Chairman.

3288. I think we left off yesterday at the point at which you proposed to give the Commission evidence and information on a matter referred to in the following terms in your letter to the Commission of July the 24th: "I feel "sure that I could state a simple and workable "plan by which all who work over eight hours "a day could be limited to eight, while at the "same time all who work less than eight hours "a day would still do so, and the owners could "extend their hours of coal drawing, and the "public would have a fuller and cheaper market "for coals?"—That is so.

3289. We should be glad to have your simple and workable plan?—I may say that in studying this question I have been forced to come to the conclusion in my own mind that if it should really become so that those who work now more than eight hours per day should either be compelled or be disposed to work only eight hours, we shall have to adopt one of three separate courses. One course would be the adoption of a single shift during the daytime. Of course I go against that entirely on this ground, that I am afraid if it were to be adopted it would be to the disadvantage of Northumberland as a county, because it would displace a very large number of both men and boys; it would fling them out of work for some time. Consequently I do not entertain that idea at all Then, in my opinion, the second course would be to take two shifts of men and boys, each having eight hours. I take it for granted that, as I have already said, the chief reason why many of our hewers object to it is because they are afraid it may lengthen their hours, and on

Chairman—continued.

that ground I think the entire county would reject a proposition of that sort. I think the difficulty could be met by adopting three shifts of hewers and two shifts of boys, the hewers each to work six-hour shifts and the boys each to work eight-hour shifts. I have repeatedly asked this question through the public press and when I have been in conversation with the opponents of the measure: "what other objection than "an unwillingness to adopt it stood in the way?" and it is only recently that we have received anything like a lucid statement of objections. My friend Mr. Burt some time ago, at the request of one of our collieries in the county —Ashington — went there and delivered an address on this important question. He had seen the proposal that I had put forward before this. Of course he raised some objections to it, and from what I have seen of his address, and from what I heard yesterday, I find that Mr. Weeks substantially endorses nearly every word that Mr. Burt utters in objection to this proposition. I contend that this means will satisfy the whole of those who want an eight hours labour day, and will also satisfy those who are opposed to it, because it will give them something less than they really now are working. I say that I think it is very simple and workable. One of the chief objections that my friend Mr Burt raised to it was that it would partially entail upon the county a portion of night-shift working, or men and boys working at night time. I may say I agree with him that as a county we are as much opposed to that as we possibly can be. Instead of increasing the night-shift work, I believe the feeling of the county is

Chairman—continued.

to decrease it as much as they possibly can, but of course we know it cannot be entirely abolished. I think that objection is not so strong as would appear at first sight, because I think that those who went in early in the morning would have an opportunity of getting out a good deal earlier than they do now. I think by the hewers in the three shifts being from the beginning of the day to the end of it 18 hours in the pit, and the boys and the rolley-way men and outsetters, and such as those, 16 hours, if they were to go in at 3 o'clock in the morning, the last of them would leave the pit at 8 at night, and those hewers who went out at 8 at night of course would go in at 2 in the afternoon, and those boys who left at 8 at night would go in at 11 in the morning. Therefore I think that they would have a very good opportunity of enjoying home and storing their minds with useful information, and these sort of things, at either end of the day Those who would come out late at night would be late in going in, and those who would go in early in the morning would come out early as well. Those boys who were in what we may term the fore shift, or the first shift of the day, would get out in time, and they would not be so fatigued with their work but that they would be able to get to the schools in the afternoon. Then the question has been asked me several times — if such a thing as that was put into operation, would it not augment the quantity of coals that are drawn; would it not have a tendency to glut the coal market, and instead of pits working regularly day after day, would they not be compelled to lay the pits idle on some days because there would not be trade, and they would not get the coals sold? Now to that objection I answer that I think the demand for that coal would just be as keen then as it is now, and I do not anticipate that there would be such a large number or such a large influx of hands by the new arrangements as to produce such a large quantity of coals. Moreover than that, I think that the hours of drawing would not exceed 13 hours a day. In addition to that, I think that the owners would be put to a considerable amount of expense by the new change, and that the men ought to try in some way, as far as they possibly can, to assist them to meet this extra expenditu[illegible] I think the extra amount of coals that t[illegible] draw, providing they could keep up [illegible] price, would tend to compensate them [illegible]tain extent for the extra expenditure they would be put to. Therefore I contend that if that is so, the workmen themselves would derive the benefit of the shorter hours, and they would not derive it at the expense of the public having to pay a dearer price for the commodity that they produce. The selling price of coals would not be raised to the general public at large. Therefore on these grounds I consider that it would be an advantage to the workmen themselves, and also to the public in general. It might mean a little more expenditure to the employers, but I may say the present opinion of my class of workmen is this, that they can afford to do it. I think that is about the gist and the sum and substance of the scheme that I have propounded previously. There is one other feature about it; when I have written about it and tried to explain it, I have tried to incorporate into it another principle which will be quite a new feature altogether in mining life, that is the proper arranging of meal times. I may say that my experience as a coal miner is that we have no stated times for the taking of meals; we get them when an opportunity presents itself. Sometimes we are kept so busy that we have to eat our meal as we are going on our road home; at other times, when we have a bit of leisure in the pit, when we are awaiting the hewers getting the coal loose, or awaiting their coming, or something of that sort, we may sit down then. But there is no regular stated period for the boys and others in the daytime taking their meals. My arrangement is this, that at the middle of each shift there should be a total cessation of work right throughout the mine for 30 minutes, that all hands might have an opportunity of taking their meal, and taking it comfortably, and then when the 30 minutes were expired all hands to commence work again. I may say that is another feature that I would like to see introduced in any change that is brought about by further mining legislation.

3290. Perhaps your scheme does not necessarily involve now defining, with precision, the particular hours at which the three shifts of hewers should go down and come up and the two shifts of off-hand men, but it might be convenient to know what your scheme is in that respect?—The three shifts of hewers could be arranged as No. 1 shift, going in at 2 a.m., and No. 2 shift at 8 a.m., and No. 3 shift at 2 p.m.

3291. When would No. 1 shift come out?—Of course No. 1 shift would come out at 8 a.m.

3292. And No. 2?—They would come out at 2 p.m.

3293. But the other shift is only going in at 2 p.m.?—Yes.

3294. Will they not change at the face?—I have not advocated that. My mode was that as the No. 2 shift were going in, the No. 1 shift would be coming out, and make the time of putting down and taking up to serve both.

3295. Take it your own way—I only want to know what you have to propose. When would the off-hand shift go in?—The off-hand shift, that is the stonemen, shifters, and tub loaders——

3296. And putters and rolley-way men?—No, I come to them after the two shifts of boys.

3297. Very well, go on?—My arrangement was that the stonemen, shifters, and tub loaders might go in at 8 p.m. and come out at 2 a.m. the following morning. With regard to the two shifts of boys, on-setters, banksmen, screeners, rolley-way men, &c., No. 1 could go in at 3 a.m. and No. 2 at 11 a.m.

3298. When would the first come out?—No. 1 shift would come out at 11, while the second shift were going in.

Chairman—continued.

3299. And the next one, No. 2 shift, would come out when?—They would come out at 7 p.m. As it is the practice now in the county of Northumberland and in the county of Durham, as well for the shifts of hewers, what we term the fore-shift and the back-shift, to change, some changing weekly and some changing fortnightly, my arrangement was that each of the shifts of both the hewers and the boys should change weekly or fortnightly, and at 7 a.m. and at 1 p.m. there should be a uniform stand of all the machinery, and the horses, and the men and boys in the pit for rest and for bait.

3300. What would be the coal-drawing hours? —I have not got it stated definitely here, but it is quite evident to me that while there were 16 hours between the going in and the coming out, if they did not commence to go down until 3 a.m. in the morning, I calculate it will be 3.30 before they commence drawing coals.

3301. 3.30 in the morning?—Yes; and consequently that is half an hour off there, and then another half an hour at mid-shift for bait —that is an hour taken off the first shift. Then there would be another half an hour; I think, at the changing of the boys, that is when the No. 1 shift was coming out and the No. 2 shift going down. My arrangement will be for the pit to stand entirely, then while the ponies were being loosed and put in the stables and fresh ones being taken out.

3302. Then the coal-drawing hours would be from 3.30 a.m. till when?—The coals would be drawn from 3.30 a.m. until 11.

3303. 11 in the morning?—Yes, and then there would be a total cessation of work while the No. 1 shift was coming up and the No. 2 shift going down, and consequently the pit would stand from 11 to 11.30.

3304. And then from 11.30 you would draw till when?—Until 6.30. I think it will be necessary for the pit to stop at 6.30 at night on account of giving each boy who was then in the pit an opportunity of being out of the pit by 7. What I would like to adopt is this: That the hours should reckon from bank to bank—from the commencement of the first cage going down in the morning, and that they should terminate with the last cage coming up at night. I think such a scheme as that could be worked with advantage to the boys and the hewers, and everybody concerned about the pit. That is the scheme that I have formulated and endeavoured to advocate.

3305. Is there anything else you wish to volunteer evidence upon before I ask the members of the Commission to address questions to you?—I do not remember anything just at the present moment.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

3306. I do not propose to ask you any question with regard to an eight hours' day, whether obtained by legislative means or otherwise, so far as regards the body of miners all over the country; but you are here, I understand, to explain to the Committee how you think the hours of work of the boys in Northumberland might be reduced?—Yes, that is so.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

3307. And you have just given a scheme by which you think that object could be accomplished?—That is so.

3308. You are aware, I suppose, that evidence has been given here by the representatives both of the men and the masters urging certain objections against such a scheme as this, and I should like to know how you meet those objections. On the part of both masters and men, it is urged in the first place that there would not be a sufficient number of boys to supply a two-shift system of boys. What is your reply to that?—My reply to that is this: That I think there are a great number of boys who are not employed, but who would then be employed, and I think that the difficulty of finding boys could be met. Moreover than that, I do not think there would be so many boys required in each shift when there were less men in each pit, and consequently not being so many required to work the pit, when there were less men there would be some boys to spare from each shift, and they could be distributed.

3309. When you say there would be less men in each shift, you propose at the same time that there should be three shifts instead of two? —Yes.

3310. Would the total output be diminished? —No, I do not think so.

3311. If the total output was not diminished, but if anything increased then how could you reduce the number of boys?—I do not really understand you.

3312. The number of boys depends upon the amount of coals to be drawn, does it not?—Not exactly.

3313. On what does it depend?—It depends upon the mode of getting them out.

3314. Would you propose another and different mode of getting them out, then?—No, not exactly; but while a good deal of the coals are drawn by horses and ponies, where it requires two horses or two ponies to draw a certain amount of coals now, one in some places would do then.

3315. Do you think then, that with improvements in the method of drawing coals, you could make up for the deficiency in the number of boys?—I think so.

3316. But is that view shared by the miners of Northumberland generally?—I do not know that.

3317. Because, surely, such an obvious point as that must have been taken into consideration by the representatives of the men?— Well, I am not aware of that either.

3318. But you have no other suggestion to meet the difficulty as to the number of boys, except first that you do not believe the difficulty exists to the extent that has been represented, and, secondly, that you think the methods of drawing coals could be improved?—I think so.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

3319. Then there is the question of night work; is there a strong objection in Northumberland to night work?—Decidedly.

3320. Your proposal would involve a good deal more night work, would it not?—Well, I think that the majority of men and boys who object to night work, object to being occupied what you may term night throughout the midnight; they would rather go in early in the morning than go in late at night and come out early in the morning. My meaning in that is this that any one would rather go in at 2 in the morning and come out at 10 in the morning than go in at 8 or 10 at night and come out at 2 in the morning.

3321. The shifters and others, would, according to your scheme, go in at 8 in the evening and come out at 2 in the morning?—Yes, according to my scheme.

3322. Therefore, the night work would be put upon their shoulders to a very large extent?—It is on their shoulders now.

3323. Have they to work the whole of the night now?—I myself am a night-shift workman, and I go in at 5 at night and come out at 1 in the morning.

3324. That is to say eight hours?—Yes. My scheme would give to these workmen a six hours shift instead of eight.

3325. There is the further objection to that which has been urged on the part of the masters, that six hours would not give enough time for the necessary work in the mine?—I think that could be met in this way, that while the hewers are 18 hours in the pit, and the boys and rolleyway men 16 hours, that leaves an hour at each end of the day—an hour when the hewers are in before the boys and an hour that they are left in after the boys come away. I think that that hour could be utilised so that where there is blasting required for getting up the stone caunches in which to make a roadway, the hewers could be occupied in drilling holes and making ready for the other men who went in afterwards to remove the stones. My meaning is that the hewers could be so arranged that the third man who was in the set of mates after he had done filling coals could occupy the rest of his time by drilling holes and getting them fired, and the stone ready for the shifters to remove when they went in. Consequently that arrangement would clear the way for the next shift coming in.

3326. Then once more your reply to that objection is, that you think that by altering the system at present adopted, and by utilising hours which at present are not utilised, there would be sufficient time for all the necessary work in the mine?—I think so.

3327. There is another objection which occurs to me. You propose that the hewers should work shifts of only six hours?—Yes.

3328. Would that not mean a reduction in the wages of each man?—My impression is that the men would take the shorter hours with a reduction of wage rather than go on as they are.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

3329. But you admit that it would, as a matter of fact, impose upon them a reduction of wage?—For a while. I think it would be so at the beginning.

3330. Why only for a while?—Because I think the state of trade in a very short time afterwards and the state of the labour market would bring up the wage to what I may term its normal state.

3331. Would you explain that further, please?—My reason for thinking so is this. In the experience that I have of Northumberland and Durham mines I find that coal hewers as a body get more money now for working shorter hours than they did—I cannot exactly say how long ago, but I think I would be safe in saying 30 or 40 years ago—for working in the same coal for longer hours; and while this is going on the seams are getting thinner and the expense of the colliery is getting greater. Consequently I am at a loss to know how it is that with an extra expenditure and a more difficult mode of working the pits, the owners can afford to pay more money for the shorter hours than they did formerly for the long hours at the same kind of work.

3332. What date are you referring to in the past?—I have not fixed upon any particular date.

3333. You say that formerly they worked longer hours and got less wages?—Yes.

3334. What time are you referring to. Can you give a date?—I may say that the hours, I think, of the hewers that would prevail——

3335. I want to know the period to which you are referring; was it not before the introduction of the blasting system?—I do not know when the blasting system was introduced. I cannot answer that.

3336. Was not the period to which you refer previous to certain improvements which have taken place in the methods of mining?—With regard to the methods I am not prepared to say anything, because I confess that I am not so well versed in that as I might be expected to be; but whether the coal was got by blasting or by hewing with the pick, there were coal getters then the same as there are now. I am not prepared to say anything about the mode of getting it; but, for the labour of getting the coal, hewers were paid less money in the early years of this century than they are now for doing the same kind of work in shorter hours. I may say that when I was a boy working in the mine, the prevalent notion among the coal hewers generally was that 4*s*. a day for hewing was looked upon as a sort of recognised standard to aim at. If a man was getting above 4*s*. a day he was supposed to be doing remarkably well, but if he was getting something less than 4*s*.—well, it was time that something was being done to try and get him more money.

3337. May I put your argument thus—you will tell me if I have misunderstood you. You say that the wages at present earned with the shorter hours are higher than those formerly

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

earned with the longer hours?—Yes, that is exactly it.

3338. And therefore you infer that if the same process were to continue and the hours were still further shortened, wages would, at least, not fall—possibly, following that analogy, they would even rise?—Well, I do not anticipate their rising very much.

3339. But you do anticipate that they would not fall. Do you think the hours could be shortened indefinitely without affecting the wages of the workers?—Oh, no.

3340. You think, however, that they can be shortened from the present number of 7½ or 7¼ down to 6 hours, and without diminishing wages?—Yes, I think so.

Mr. *Burt.*

3341. I think you said in answer to the Chairman that you had been in the Northumberland pits since 1874?—Since 1884.

3342. Seven years?—Seven years.

3343. At what collieries have you worked during that period?—Elswick and Walker.

3344. No other?—Not in Northumberland during that time. I did work at Seaton Burn colliery when I was just a lad.

3345. Since you came to manhood you have only worked at those two collieries?—Exactly.

3346. Have you been in any of the steam coal collieries?—No.

3347. I suppose you are aware that the largest of the collieries are connected with the steam coal trade?—Yes.

3348. I think you said, too, in answer to the Chairman, that you had not been appointed by the Union to give evidence?—No.

3348*a*. Have you been appointed by the men at the Walker colliery?—No.

3349. Did they give you any authority to represent them?—No, they have neither assented nor objected to it.

(The Chairman read a letter received by Mr. Burnett from Mr. F. Mackay authorising the witness to speak on behalf of the Eight Hours' League.)

3350. Is Mr. Mackay the secretary of the local lodge at Gosforth colliery?—I do not think so. He is a check-weighman. I think the secretary's name is Mossop.

3351. What is this Eight Hours' League for which he gives you authority to speak?—Well, he was at the Trades Union Congress, and one or two more from Backworth colliery, and there were one or two men there from North Elswick colliery, and they asked me to go along with them and to consider the advisability of forming a league there and then. And we agreed to try and establish a league. I may say that the number of votes that was given in favour of the Miners' Eight Hours' Bill at that Congress encouraged and stimulated us to do so.

3352. I do not want you, unless you wish it yourself, to go into details; the point I want information upon is as to whether those that

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

met were miners of Northumberland, and exclusively miners of Northumberland?—They were not exclusively Northumberland miners. There were two Durham miners, one from Redheugh colliery, in the county of Durham, and one, a check-weighman, residing at Winlaton, who came from Rowland's Gill colliery. The rest of us that met were Northumberland miners or representatives. I call Mackay a Northumberland miner, though he is not in the mine. He is a check-weighman for the men.

3353. I do not understand you to say that you have the authority of any section of the Miners' Union to speak on their behalf?—No, no further than this. We had that matter talked over when we met, and I may say it was a unanimous understanding among us that the very fact of my having been returned to the Congress as a delegate to represent the Northumberland miners was an indication that the Northumberland miners wanted the eight hour question at least ventilated in the Congress.

3354. How many colleagues had you at that Congress as delegates?—There were nine Northumbrians.

3355. Were those also in favour of the eight hours by Act of Parliament?—I think they were directly opposed to it.

3356. Then would you regard your being there as conclusive evidence of anything more than a wish to have the subject discussed. Nobody, of course, objects to discussion, but did you take it as an indication that they are favourable to the eight hours?—Decidedly.

3357. Although there were other eight that were directly opposed?—Other nine.

3358. There were 10, and out of the 10 there were nine who opposed?—Yes.

3359. And yet you take it that your appointment was an indication that they are favourable to the eight hours?—Decidedly. I may say as an explanation of that, that in the list of names that was sent out into the county to be voted upon, I was, I believe, the only one in the whole list who was looked upon as an advocate of the eight hours; but if there had been more, my opinion is that there would have been more returned.

3360. With regard to that, was there any exclusiveness manifested in formulating that list?—Not that I am aware of.

3361. Are you aware that the lists sent out consisted of all the men who for some years past have been nominated to fill any office in connexion with the Association, or any office whatever?—No, I am not aware of that. My impression was, and I think it can be substantiated by the circular that came with the list of names, that the men in that list of names that was sent to us to select delegates from were men who had occupied the position of a delegate at some previous delegate meeting—those who were then delegates, and those who had been delegates, but not any other officer that I am aware of.

3362. You are a member of the Northumberland Miners' Union, and you have taken an active part in connexion with it?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

3363. You have been a delegate, and have occupied other positions?—Yes.

3364. Are you aware that the usual system, except in cases where there is not time enough, is for the colliery or lodge to nominate the men for any position that may require to be filled?—No, I am not aware of that. I do not think it is exactly so.

3365. Do you deny that that is so?—I am not prepared to dispute it *in toto*, but I can scarcely receive it. The very fact of my being here arises out of a sort of thing like that. I think that the letter that I wrote to Mr. Burnett first would be a sort of a complaint that men who might be supposed to be advocating the eight hour movement had not had an opportunity of nominating men to come to this Board.

3366. Did you not notice the exception I made in my question of cases when there was not time to go through the usual process, but that there is otherwise the mode of electing men to the committees, and to other offices of the Association, and are you aware that in this particular case the Commissioners wanted evidence almost immediately from Northumberland?—No, I am not aware of that. I know they wanted evidence, but I was not aware that the Northumberland Association was so hard pressed for time. It is news to me.

3367. I think it is fair to give you that explanation, and to state that the Committee therefore, to save time, nominated, I believe, half a dozen men?—Yes, I think you are labouring under a wrong impression. Those names that were sent out, I understand, were the six men who formed the Wage Committee.

3368. And they were the men who had the highest votes in connexion with all the recent elections; so that they did their best to get representative men, and did the best they could, being pressed for time, to get men fairly representing the district?—My impression is this, that the six names that were sent out were the men who then constituted the Wage Committee, and I may say that I have the authority of one or two of the representatives of the different collieries of the county, who informed me that in electing men to attend the Trades Union Congress, instead of taking one name at a time, and taking a vote for or against him, they grouped the Wage Committee together as a whole. They appointed all six names at once, and if that was the mode of voting at the various collieries, I may say that the number of votes that I received was the next highest number of votes recorded; and that to my colleagues was an indication that the men were anxious to have someone at the Congress to ventilate the question.

3369. In your evidence yesterday you expressed great dissatisfaction with the Union on the question, as I understand, of the hours of the boys?—On the want of efforts being made.

3370. Then it is the apathy of the Union and its apparent indifference to the subject of the hours of the boys of which you complain?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

3371. Will you be a little more specific. First of all would you say whether it is with the members generally or with the officials, or with both, that you are dissatisfied?—I must be specific in the matter. My complaint would rather fix itself upon the officials than the rank and file.

3372. What is your complaint against the officials. Is it because they refuse to carry out decisions that may be come to by the district, or is it because they advocate certain opinions that are not your opinions?—I may say it is because they hold opinions that are not my opinions; and, in addition to that, because they do not seem to take up the spirit of the trade generally and try to educate the members up to the necessity and the advantage of getting a shorter working day. And what makes me so much more ardent in this matter is this—to allow it to remain as one of the stated objects of the Association year after year without ever making any direct attempt. I give them this credit, they have attempted occasionally to reduce the hours, but they have never, to my knowledge, made an attempt to reduce them to eight.

3373. Then you complain that they do not hold your opinions?—Yes.

3374. And that they do not educate the men; does not that mean that they themselves are not educated yet?—Oh, no, far from that. I believe that they love darkness rather than light in that matter.

3375. Your complaint, however, is that nothing has been done; but did not you mention in your evidence yesterday that within your own memory, or at any rate within that of your father, who you said was a miner, the hours had been reduced from 16 to 10?—I think I said they were reduced from an indefinite number to 12 per day by the 1844 strike.

3376. From an indefinite number, running up, sometimes from 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, to 16?—Yes.

3377. That was not by legislative enactment?—Certainly not; but it was by a strike.

3378. Was that 12 from bank to bank?—I take it for granted it meant so when they said to me 12 hours.

3379. Are you aware it was a very common thing for boys to be in the pit 13 hours, and that the 12 hours was generally 12 hours employment?—No, I was not aware of that. My impression was that my father told me that the strike established a 12-hour day; I understood him to mean 12 hours from bank to bank.

3380. Then following on from the 12 hours they have been reduced now to 10 for nearly all the boys and people employed in the mines; would you consider that nothing?—Well, I consider if it takes 28½ years since the Association was formed, to bring them down two hours, if we are to wait another 28½ years to bring them down to eight, I think a good many of us will not care whether it is eight or any other figure.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

3381. What has been done by legal enactment during the same period, your method of dealing with the subject?—I think the legal enactment of 1872 and 1878 was a good deal more important than any other arrangement that has been made since the Association was formed. My meaning for saying that is this—that neither the Association nor the employers can violate the Act with impunity, whereas we have illustrations on record where men have refused to abide by the decisions come to by the Trade Union; I make reference now particularly to the rolley-way men.

3382. The Act of 1872, which I am not likely to disparage, having advocated it very strongly, dealt, did it not, only with the hours of those 16 years of age?—Decidedly.

3383. And it left all above 16 years of age without any legal limit whatever?—Yes.

3384. Then anything that has been done in the direction of limiting the hours of those above 16 years of age has been done by Union effort?—Yes.

3385. As you have referred to the rolley-way men, are you aware that the Union obtained eight hours for the rolley-way men?—Yes.

3386. And they have voluntarily increased their hours to 10 and 11?—Yes.

3387. With additional pay?—Yes.

3388. You are aware of that?—Yes.

3389. Would you, in dealing with full-grown men, say that by Act of Parliament it is to be penal for them to work beyond eight hours per day?—Decidedly.

3390. Even for increased pay?—Yes.

3391. Now, then, going to the votes of the district on the question of eight hours, you referred to the Edinburgh Conference and the votes arising out of that conference?—Yes.

3392. Do you remember that conference?—I do not remember any details about it. I have no recollection any further that what I have read to you in the Minutes.

3393. Are you aware that the primary object in calling that conference was to deal with the limitation of the output?—Yes, I think it was.

3394. And that it was only incidental to that, that the question of limitation of hours came under discussion?—I can scarcely accept that.

3395. But you have said you are aware that the primary object was the limitation of the output rather than the shortening of the hours?—Yes.

3396. So far as the Northumberland miners are concerned, they at that time had just emerged from the strike which we all very much deplored?—Yes.

3397. Wages were very low, and the men were suffering a good deal, were they not, in consequence of the depression of trade and the lying idle of the pits?—Yes.

3398. Would you say, then, that this was quite a normal period so far as the Northumberland miners were concerned?—I think that they had almost, if not entirely, recovered to their normal state again.

3399. In 1887?—This was in 1888, I think.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

3400. How many votes do you say there were in favour of the eight hours?—According to the record that I have there were 199 votes given in favour and 19 against.

3401. Have you any further records of votes that were taken at that time?—I have further records of the votes taken in the year 1887.

3402. You said you had very carefully examined those records; have you a record of a vote that was taken in May 1889, when the ballot papers were sent out?—Yes, I think I have.

3403. That was with a view to ascertain the views of the men preparatory to a vote in connexion with the Trade Union Congress?—Yes.

3404. I will put the question to you in this form: Are you aware that when the vote was taken at that time—an individual vote by ballot—that the great majority of the miners were neutral, and did not vote at all?—My impression is that they never got an opportunity of voting. I never received a ballot paper of any kind to vote on this question, and I have been a member all that time.

3405. Are you aware that ballot papers were sent out to the collieries?—I had a record that they were, but I never saw one and never learned of there being one at our colliery.

3406. Have you made complaint to your lodge secretaries on the subject, and had that complaint been sent to the head office?—Oh, no.

3407. Why?—Because I did not think it would have any effect.

3408. Then are you aware that the votes recorded of those who did vote were three to one against an Eight Hours' Bill. I will put the question to you in the way that it was sent out from the office to be voted upon. "Are you in favour of an eight hours working day?" Those who voted for were 211; those against, 744. Were you aware of that fact when you gave the record of the votes yesterday?—Yes, I was aware of that fact.

3409. Why did not you mention it when referring to the number of votes that had been taken on the subject?—Because I had not it in my memory at the time. I have nothing to fear from it, because I have a record of it somewhere or another, if I could only lay hold of it.

3410. Then are you aware of another vote that was taken?—In that same year?

3411. When Mr. Fenwick and I were appointed to go to a Miners' Congress at Birmingham the miners were asked: "Are you in favour of your "representatives voting in favour of the eight "hours for all men and boys working under-"ground?" No, 113, yes, 85. Did you know of that vote?—Yes.

3412. Why did not you mention it yesterday?—I must give the same answer as I did. I was reminded that time was getting short, and I left out some notes that I had intended to mention had it not been that time was so short.

3413. With regard to your charge that the Union has been indifferent and apathetic, and especially the officials of the Union, you mentioned that a special committee was appointed some time ago to inquire into the

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

hours of the boys; and you have before you, I think the report, have you not?—Yes.

3414. You used, yesterday, rather strong, if not violent language, as regards the opposition. You said it was selfish, and that it arose either from the hewers—those that now have less than eight hours or from those who never descend a pit; are we to conclude that in your opinion the hewers, who constitute the majority of the underground miners of Northumberland, are not entitled to an opinion on a question of this sort without being taunted with selfishness?—I would not like to do anything, or to say anything, which would have any tendency whatever towards their not having any say or voice or vote in the matter, but I think, when we ask a man why he opposes a certain thing, and he says "I am not going to allow you to lengthen my hours," it is reasonable to suppose that he objects for fear his hours should be lengthened. Now that is invariably the answer I have got from individuals when I have spoken to them individually on the subject.

3415. You also apply the epithet to those who never descend a pit; do you think that only those who descend a pit are entitled to have an opinion as to the hours?—What I said was to this effect, that no opposition came to this movement except from those who never went into the pit at all, or from the coal-getters. Of course, I expressed no opinion whether they had a right to a say or not. I think they have as much right to a say as anybody else.

3416. Will you look at the names of the members appointed on that committee to deal with this question?—Yes, I see the names.

3417. Will you take it from me that with regard to the constitution of that committee the names were sent in as nominees from collieries, and that they were appointed in the usual way by the vote of the men?—Decidedly; I quite agree with that; but that does not destroy the effect of what I said, that of those men four were coal hewers, and the other four, who are not workers, are agents.

3418. They were all elected, and we may assume that they had the confidence of the miners and those connected with the Association?—I think so.

3419. May I ask if you know that after this report was issued a special delegate meeting was called to discuss this subject of the hours of the boys?—Was it after or before?

3420. After?—I understood it was before, and these votes are proxy votes.

3421. I was not referring to the proxy votes at all; but after the report was issued, and before the proxy votes, a special meeting was convened to discuss the subject of the hours of the boys?—I do not remember just now. Was it in that year?

3422. Yes. It is no use going into any further detail with regard to it, but perhaps you will accept it from me that a meeting was called to discuss the subject?—Yes.

3423. And then, as a result of that delegate meeting, at which all the collieries were represented, the questions were sent out and voted upon?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

3424. Those that you gave yesterday?—Yes.

3425. Are you aware that on that occasion the vote was by what is called preferential vote—that is, the miners were asked to vote in favour of the proposition that they cared most for, and then the next in order of their preference?—Yes.

3426. A vote was deliberately taken more than a fortnight after the delegate meeting had been held to fully discuss the subject, and the result was as you stated yesterday, namely, in favour of a uniform eight hours single shift for all classes of workmen, including boys, one colliery, Backworth, in favour of two shifts of boys of eight hours, with three shifts of hewers, none?—Yes.

3427. That is your scheme?—Yes.

3428. Where was Walker, the colliery you represented or the colliery you are connected with?—Number four.

3429. Then they did not vote for that?—But I might say that with regard to Walker, as a Walker workman I did not vote on that question either.

3430. You said yesterday that one of your complaints is that you cannot get a definite vote; what do you mean by that?—I think I said a full and complete vote.

3431. You mean for every member to have a ballot paper?—Yes.

3432. Have you ever, as a member of the Walker Lodge, suggested that?—Yes.

3433. Have they agreed with it and sent it in to the office to be put on the programme?—No.

3434. You did not convince them of the desirability of it?—No. The most of my opposition was at Walker.

3435. Then you have to get over that preliminary difficulty of convincing your fellow-workmen whom you are every day associated with?—I am trying day by day to do that.

3436. You said the reason the miners oppose is because the leaders go against it?—I said I had an impression that they were so loyal to the leaders: that because the leaders did oppose many of them would.

3437. Do you think they are so docile that they will follow their leaders through thick and thin?—My experience of them, as far as I have known them, is that they generally tended that way.

3438. Have you ever tried to lead the Northumberland men where they did not want to go?—Yes.

3439. Did you carry them?—No; but I was not an agent.

3440. Or you think that you should?—No. I have not sufficient tact about me to succeed on that line.

3441. Now there are one or two words in connexion with the letter to the Commission in regard to which I would like to ask you a question or two. You say that the employers would not take very much, if any, harm by

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

their adoption of the Eight Hours Miners' Bill now before the country. You heard Mr. Weeks and Mr. Lamb in their evidence yesterday speak on behalf of themselves and the Coal Owners' Association?—Yes.

3442. You heard how emphatically they opposed the eight hours?—Decidedly.

3443. Are you still of opinion that they would not take any harm?—Well, not any harm; they would take some amount of harm, but I have already said I think they can afford to bear it.

3444. Then you go on to say that "there are "hundreds of our northern miners who do not "attend the meetings of their Union, many of "whom do not attend purely because they are "so tired with having been in the dark and "dreary mine working excessively hard for not "less than 10 hours, and in many cases 11, and "in some 12 hours a day;" now, to whom does that remark apply?—To rolley-way men and onsetters principally.

3445. Would you class the rolley-way men among the men who work excessively hard?—Not the whole of them. Some days they do and some days they do not.

3446. You say "not less than 10 hours, and in many cases 11, and in some 12 hours." This letter is dated the 24th of July. Do you know that before this letter was written an agreement had been come to, and not only come to but put into operation, that no boys should work except in the case of those engaged on endless ropes and chains—a very small number—more than 10 hours from bank to bank, and none more than 10½ hours from bank to bank?—I ought to have known, but it seems as though it had escaped my memory at the time, that that agreement was come to. But the class of men there referred to as working those excessively long hours have not had their hours very much shortened by the new change.

3447. That is another question. You say they are not shortened?—Not very much.

3448. Is not the agreement carried out?—Not very much; I mean, with regard to the onsetters and rolley-way men.

3449. You did not refer to the boys in that connexion—of course they do not attend the meetings?—No.

3450. How many of those men are working excessively hard, and more than 10 hours a day now?—I cannot give the exact number; I do not know how many there are. I have inquired at different sources, and it seems as though nobody can tell me.

3451. Then you go on to say that there are over 9,000 workmen and boys in this county who would gain an aggregate of over 18,000 hours a day. How did you get that 18,000?—By the number of surface hands and the number of men and boys employed below ground who work 10 hours a day being added together

3452. What is your evidence for that; the 9,000 who work 10 hours a day?—My evidence is Mr. Provand's return.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

3453. Will you give the numbers and let us see how they work from that return?—I find here in the Newcastle district coal mines in Northumberland, the number of men and boys engaged in taking minerals from the face to the shaft is 4,745.

3454. What are their hours?—10·13. The number of persons employed on the surface is 4,648, and their average number of hours, exclusively of the meal times, is 9·34. As this includes the meal times I expect that this means the time that they are engaged at their work, and consequently the meal times being added on to the time recorded here it makes them 10 hours from the beginning of their service to the end of each day. Adding those numbers together we get a total of 9,393. That is how I make that out.

3455. Some of them have less than nine hours, and you include those above ground as well as those below in that. It is not merely a miners' eight hours' Bill that you are dealing with now, but you are coming to the surface. Then you go on in your letter to say that "the majority "of over 11,000 will not, nay I believe they "dare not, give full and free opportunities for "the 9,000 odd to ventilate their opinions and "to record their votes on the eight hours' "movement." In what way are they hindered? Is it intimidation or Trade Union terrorism, or anything of that sort?—They are hindered by these means—that having a dread that their hours may be lengthened, they prevent any vote being carried in favour of a full and complete ballot vote being taken.

3456. And that is all you mean?—Not exactly. As a very large number of the persons who will be benefited by it are half-members, they are prevented from voting on a question of that kind.

3457. Do you know, as a member of the Northumberland Miners' Union, and one who has taken a somewhat active part in connexion with it, that each colliery or lodge has the opportunity of sending in a suggestion to the delegate meeting, and that the suggestion appears on the programme, and if it is approved of by a majority of the members it is carried out?—Yes, that is so, by the majority of the delegates.

3458. Representing the members?—The members who attend the meetings. But I also know, in addition to that, so far as my experience of the collieries goes, that not one-seventh of the men of those collieries attends the meetings.

3459. Assuming that there is a strong feeling in favour of any change, or in favour of anything, would not that reach the programme, and be discussed at a delegate meeting?—If there was a general feeling.

3460. If there was a general feeling in favour of the eight hours, is it not likely that it would be put forward locally and sent in through the proper channel and discussed at the delegate meeting?—I may say that, as far as I can remember, if the agitation became very keen

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

and excitable, it might cause more members to attend and take a keener interest in the matter, but I have spoken principally of the normal state of the society. What you refer to would be what I would term an extraordinary state of affairs.

3461. You said in your evidence yesterday that you spoke for those who have not any voice themselves. Have the putters and others any opportunities of making their opinions and feelings felt if they hold those opinions very strongly; or, in other words, have you never known the putters come out on strike and lay the pits idle without any notice?—Yes.

3462. At Walker colliery and elsewhere?—Yes.

3463. Have they ever done that on the subject of shortening their hours?—No, not that I am aware of.

3464. But if they felt very strongly on that subject I presume they would take some such method; I am not advocating it?—Perhaps so.

3465. You have never known any agitation even among the putters, and they have methods of making their opinions felt?—They have methods, but not very justifiable methods.

3466. But does the feeling exist?—I think there is as strong a feeling in favour as there is against. I have reason to suppose that if they were appealed to on the matter that they would lean in favour of it.

3467. Now you give figures again, and you say that you "Voice the desires of 9,393 "Northumbrian men and boys in and about "the coal mines." You get that number in the way you have mentioned?—Yes.

3468. You say that "a few are against the "eight hour limitation, because they fear that "an eight-hour limit may result in being made "an eight-hour level." Can you give an instance of any opponent of the eight hours, or any agent or representative of the miners who has put that forward as his reason for opposing the eight hours?—Well, if you choose to have me cite names I can do so, but I am not prepared, because I did not think they would be required. I may say that the president of the lodge of which I am a member myself, at Walker, has repeatedly made that assertion, that he will oppose an eight-hour day for miners, because if he supported it it means a lengthening of his daily working hours by one hour per day, and I may say that some time ago, when I was holding an open air public debate on this matter with one of our fellow workmen from Walker, there were men there from North Elswick colliery and also from South Elswick colliery, and there were some from Cox Lodge. I simply asked these men if they worked in pits, and I think there was a group of, at the least, 15 to 20 of them who were debating on the merits of the two men who had been debating on the platform, and they said to me, "Jaques, you will not get away "with that sort of thing here if we can stop "you."

Chairman.

3469. Would it not suffice for you to say that you made this statement because you heard that view expressed by certain men?—Yes, that will meet it, I think.

Mr. *Burt.*

3470. Now, coming to your simple and workable plan that you detailed this morning, you do not admit the difficulties that have been referred to, as I understood, from your answers to Mr. Balfour; you do not see any very great difficulties?—They are not so great as efforts have been made to make them appear.

3471. Let us take them *seriatim* with regard to night working. You admit that there is a very strong feeling against night working?—Yes.

3472. And that your plan would increase night working to some extent?—Do you say I have made that admission? I do not remember having made it.

3473. Do you admit that if you had three shifts of men and two shifts of boys that the number working at nights would be increased?—I am at a loss to apprehend the question. When you say I admit it would increase the night shift working, I do not expect that you mean that I admitted it would increase the night-shift working of day-shift workers. My meaning for saying it might increase the night-shift work is this, that it might cause a larger number of men to be employed as shifters and stonemen.

3474. Would not the number of those who go in at 1 and come out at 9 be increased?—My figures were 2 and 8.

3475. Your argument is that the chief objection to the night shift is working all night?—Yes.

3476. Is there not an objection that you never heard—an objection on the ground of their not being able to attend meetings or classes, and that those who are inclined to utilise their leisure time in that way are not afforded an opportunity and are deprived of social intercourse; is there anything at all in that objection?—That objection comes from those who are continually in the night shift, who never have an opportunity of change, and I do not think it would be upheld by the hewers, who would change alternately, it might be weekly or fortnightly.

3477. Your suggestion is that the first shift should go in at 2 o'clock?—Hewers.

3478. You were in Northumberland, were you not, at the time when there was such a strong agitation against the 2 o'clock hour?—No, I think not. I do not remember any agitation of that nature since I came into it.

3479. You are not aware that there was a very strong agitation, and that the hours were put back as a result of that agitation and through negotiations?—No, I was not in the county then.

3480. But you will accept it from me that that is the case?—Yes; but I think you have left a screw short. I think that the reason why

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

they objected to that was because they had to work from 2 till their mates went in at 9.30 or 10 to release them, because their hours were so long.

3481. You were not in the district; you do not know the reason why?—No; I surmise that was the reason.

3482. Now as to the scarcity of boys. You said, in answer to Mr. Balfour, you would adopt some different method of getting out the coal. What is that method?—If there were not so many men getting coal, my inference was there would not be so many coals to bring out. Consequently fewer hands could bring out the lesser quantity of coals.

3483. Do you admit that there is at present at a great number of collieries very great difficulty in getting a sufficient number of boys?—I have heard it said so, but I was not aware of it until I did hear it said so.

3484. That does not apply to Walker, you think?—No.

3485. Is it the fact that at Walker as much as 10*s.* a day has been paid recently to boys—putters I presume?—No, I am not aware of that. I never heard it. I am aware of this, that some short time ago we had a little agitation over a change made in the mode of putting, and the putting is exceedingly arduous work—it takes the very strongest of the young men that you can get hold of to do it. Weaker men cannot do it at all, and in order to get the young men to leave off their hewing and commence this heavy putting that was offered to them, they were told "If you will only come and put for us we will pay you 10*s.* a day."

3486. You know that that has been the case?—Only very recently, and only that for a short time. It is not a general thing.

3487. Would that not be some indication of the difficulty of getting boys?—Boys could not do that work; it is men's work.

3488. Then I will say "these young men."—That is more correct.

3489. Would not that be some evidence of the difficulty of getting that amount of labour?—I think there are a good many young men hewing coal at the present time who would take that kind of work then.

3490. Is Walker more or less disadvantageously situated as compared with other collieries for getting boy labour. Is there not in that neighbourhood a large working-class population apart from the miners?—Oh, I think it has exceptional facilities for getting boys.

3491. Then with regard to the difficulty of getting the faces made ready, your system would have only the six hours' interval?—Yes.

3492. Is it not the fact that at very many places now there are very great difficulties in getting the places made ready—owing to want of time?—I do not think that it is owing to want of time. I think it is owing to the want of willingness to employ more hands.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

3493. If that difficulty really exists now, would it not be increased if you had three shifts of men following in continuously?—No, I do not think so.

3494. Do you know that the number of men working in the thin seams in Northumberland is constantly increasing?—Yes.

3494*a*. And that there are great complaints of the difficulty of getting the tubs near enough to fill the coal?—Yes.

3495. Especially in the case of the back-shift men?—Yes.

3496. Are you aware that the agents of the Union have been out at Walker again and again on that very question?—Yes.

3497. And that there is now a complaint in at the offices again on that particular point?—Yes, I quite understand it.

3498. Do you also agree that it is the back-shift men that have the great difficulty in filling the coal?—Yes.

3499. Now, if another set had to follow them in without an interval, would that difficulty not be greatly increased?—That difficulty would be greatly increased if there were no other arrangement made; but there could be arrangements made to meet that difficulty and remove it.

3500. If the men went in continuously still the stone could be shot and the heights made up?—The arrangement could be made for the men to make their own caunch heights and carry the caunch in to their own place, as they have done in several places.

3501. Is there much blasting in Walker?—Yes, a good deal.

3502. Have you ever as a miner experienced any inconvenience from what we call "powder reek" remaining in the place?—Yes.

3503. Then suppose you had blasting going on all the 24 hours—because I suppose that much of the stone would have to be got up or down, whichever was done, to make height by blasting. If you had blasting going on continuously all the 24 hours from one week into another, would that difficulty be very greatly increased?—I would not agree with any arrangement made for blasting during the whole 24 hours. The reek from the blasting at the latter end of the third shift would clear while the one shift was going out and the other coming in.

3504. Do you mean that you would have shifts of men in getting coal where blasting was necessary without resorting to that method of saving their labour?—I mean that the third shift of the hewers could have the work so arranged, and the management of the colliery could have things so arranged that no blasting should be done until the latter portion or the latter hour or hour and a half or so of the third shift hewer's time, and that when the blasting was done, between that hewer going out and the shifter going in there would be time for the current to carry the reek away, and when the shifter came in to clear the stones there would be a clear place for him.

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Mr. *Burt*—continued.

3505. I do not know whether you are aware that at miners' conferences an objection has repeatedly been put forward against a double shift system on the ground of the desirability of a total cessation of work in order that the mine might be thoroughly purified and ventilated during the interval?—I have never seen any report to that effect. I quite accept your statement to that effect, but I have never seen the record.

3506. You would not agree it was a desirable thing?—I think we should be compelled to make use of the circumstances that we are labouring under. If we could abolish the double shift without displacing a large number of men and boys, I would certainly go in for abolishing the double shift.

3507. You seem to see the connexion in some cases between hours of labour and wages, and you said that in your opinion the miners would readily accept any reduction that followed as a consequence upon a diminution of produce?—A proportionate reduction.

3508. You think they would?—I think so.

3509. Why do you think that the coal hewers would be different from the rolley-way men and the screeners and others who you admit sold their leisure for additional pay?—Because I think they are more enlightened and are more educated on the subject than they were then. I think it is 20 years ago when that charge was made with regard to the rolley-way men, or somewhere near it.

3510. You do not mean it is 20 years since they went back to the long hours, but that it is 20 years since the arrangement was made. It was carried out for some years. Perhaps you are not aware of that?—No, I was under the impression that it was carried out for a very short time.

3511. You mentioned a discussion you had had?—I have had three or four discussions.

3512. You had a discussion with Mr. Boyle?—Two.

3513. Was a vote taken after these discussions?—Might I ask the Chairman if I am bound to answer questions that have not arisen on the evidence I have given.

Chairman.

3514. Did you give evidence yesterday about the discussion with Mr. Boyle?—No.

Mr. *Burt.*

3515. You mentioned a discussion with somebody this morning?—I am not shirking the answer. I am quite prepared to answer the question.

After a short adjournment,

Chairman.

(*To witness.*) I interposed when Mr. Burt was about to ask some question founded upon a certain discussion between you and Mr. Boyle, not as at all feeling it was probable that Mr. Burt's question was an improper one, but merely as feeling that our time was short (we have other witnesses summoned for to-day), and desiring to invite Mr. Burt to consider how far the question he was about to put was, in his opinion, a needful one. He has explained to us what the nature of his question is, and with what view it is being put, and we are of opinion that it is such a question as might very properly be put, and we shall therefore ask you to reply to it.

Mr. *Burt.*

3516. You have had two public discussions with Mr. Hugh Boyle, who is a miner at Seghill colliery?—Yes.

3517. One at the Walker colliery at which you work, and the other at Seghill colliery at which he works?—Yes.

3518. After those discussions a vote was taken on both occasions?—Yes.

3519. Would you object to state the result of that vote?—I should not object to state the result provided I could state what, in my opinion, affected the result.

Chairman.

3520. What was the question submitted to the vote?—The question that we debated, to put it in a plain intelligible form, was: If an eight hour Bill should become law, will it do good or will it do harm to Northumbrians in particular and to the whole of the miners in general, and if it should do harm instead of good is it possible to estimate the amount of harm it will do. That was the question that we discussed.

3521. What was the question submitted to a vote, that is what we want to know?—The question submitted to a vote was—those of you who are in favour of obtaining an eight hours labour day——

3522. By legislation?—By legislation,—vote; those of you who are against it, vote.

Mr. *Burt.*

3523. At Walker how many voted in favour?—I really cannot remember the number of votes, but I may say there was a preponderating majority against it.

3524. I may say that I have a letter from Mr. Boyle on the subject, in which he says that three voted for, and all the rest against it?—That would be somewhere about correct.

3525. Then, subsequently, the discussion was continued at Seghill colliery, and the result there, Mr. Boyle says, was that four voted in favour?—Yes.

3526. So that there was some progress there?—I do not think so.

Chairman.

3527. When did this take place; recently?—I think it was in the month of March.

3528. In this year?—Yes.

3529. Of whom did the body consist to whom the vote was submitted?—That is what I would like to come at. I may say that the meeting

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

3546. Mr. Weeks was not one of the workmen?—I quite admit that, but at the same time he was speaking of a question that affected the workmen.

3547. Let me ask you a question that affected them generally. What was their action in the strike of 1887; were they led by their officials or did they assert their independence and declare they would act by themselves?—Well, they asserted their independence.

3548. Very well, you see there is something to rely upon—they are hard-headed, independent Northumbrians, and they are not so docile as you want to make it appear?—Of course you have your opinion of what I said.

3549. Here is the fact of a very important point when they refused to be guided by their leaders and acted independently, and you cannot give us a case where they have followed the lead, because all the evidence you have given is no proof of it?—If I had anticipated that I would be required to give illustrations I think I could have furnished myself with some. I think that you have opened out one, and I think I am safe in saying that is the only one you can find.

3550. It is the only case that has ever been put to the test?——

Chairman.

Perhaps that is sufficiently elucidated.

Mr. *Trow.*

I only want it clear as to the Northumbrian miners really being less independent than they are.

The *Witness.*

I did not intend my remarks to bring any discredit upon their independence; my idea was to show their loyalty.

Mr. *Abraham.*

3551. Have there been any means by which the Northumberland miners could have known your views upon the eight hours' question before you were selected to attend the Trades Union Congress?—I may say that I have repeatedly written letters on the subject, advocating it n the two northern daily papers that are most widely circulated, the "Newcastle Daily Chronicle" and the "Newcastle Daily Leader."

3552. Anything else?—I may say that my debate with Mr. Hugh Boyle was very well reported in the "Newcastle Daily Leader" on the Monday following, and I have been informed —I do not know how far it goes towards being correct—that a good many people got the paper on the Monday purposely to see that debate, who would not have got it otherwise.

3553. Was it after the publication of your letters and your debate that you were sent?—Oh, yes.

3554. Then you were not sent when they were unaware of your views?—I think not.

3555. I think you said in cross-examination that you do not consider the difficulties of finding boys as great as Mr. Weeks put them forth yesterday?—That is so.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

3556. You are still of that opinion?—Yes.

3557. Then in your opinion where does the greater difficulty come in, with boys under 16 or young persons between 16 and 21?—I do not know of any difficulty that comes in at all.

3558. You do not know of any difficulty?—No.

3559. Have they a sufficient number of both classes of boys?—If they have not a sufficient number of boys they have a sufficient number of young men.

3560. I suppose you are aware of the fact that the hours of these boys were reduced in 1871?—I have learnt that since I came here. I was informed previously that it was in 1869, but I do not suppose the year will matter very much.

3561. You agree that they were reduced in 1871?—I am bound to agree to it. I know no other.

3562. Was it not in the year 1871 that the Mines Act, which came into force in 1872, was passed really?—I think so.

3563. Did that regulate the hours of the boys and bring them down to 10?—I think it had a wonderful effect in doing so.

3564. But is there not a section in that Act preventing boys under 16 years of age from being worked more than 10 hours in any one day?—Yes, decidedly.

3565. Then the mine-owners of Northumberland and the workmen, in agreeing to reduce those hours in 1871, did what they knew they would be compelled to do by the Act of Parliament in 1872?—That is my opinion.

3566. So after all it was the Act that brought about the reductions of the hours?—Yes, I think so.

3567. Have the hours of these boys under 16 ever been increased since?—I can speak for the collieries I worked at and others that I have made inquiries about, and I find this: that up to the middle of this year I may say there were a very large proportion of the collieries in Northumberland spoken of as 11-hour collieries, and those commenced at 6 o'clock in the morning and loosed at 5 o'clock.

3568. I am referring to boys under 16; have the hours of boys under 16 been increased since the Act of 1871 came into force in 1872?—I do not think that has happened.

3569. You do not know of any case where they have been increased?—No.

3570. Have the hours of the young persons between 16 and 21 been increased since?—Yes.

3571. They are not regulated by the Act?—No.

3572. Do you think that any payment whatever would justify the increasing of the hours of labour underground in the case of young persons between the ages of 16 and 21?—No, I do not think so.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

3573. You do not think so?—No. My way would be to prohibit the hours being lengthened even for pay.

3574. Have you any means of knowing what is the opinion of the Northumberland miners with respect to regulating the hours of young persons up to the age of 21 by Act of Parliament, in favour or against?—I have this evidence: that at the end of Congress week a demonstration was held on Newcastle Town Moor, and a very large proportion of Northumberland miners assembled at that place to hear addresses from various of the Congress delegates. With the view of ascertaining the state of feeling at the various platforms, I went from one to the other and I found this: that where there were a certain batch of men speaking on the eight hours question generally, and also advocating the eight hours for miners, the largest number of hearers were present. That indicated to me that the biggest number of those who were on the Moor that day, took more interest in the eight hours movement, and as I looked amongst them and tried to discern who were miners and who were not, I was led to think that there were more miners at that platform than there were at any of the others.

3575. I am afraid you did not exactly understand my question. Have you any means of knowing the opinions of the miners of Northumberland as to the desirability of regulating the hours of boys or young persons under 21 years of age by an Act of Parliament?—The only means, that I can conceive, which could be adopted with that object, would be to take a plebiscite or a full and complete vote.

3576. That is not what I mean. Do you happen to know the opinion of the miners of Northumberland upon this question; what is the prevalent opinion among them as to the desirability of regulating the hours of young persons by law?—The opinion that I can form from interviews that I have had with various representatives from different collieries, is that the boys themselves, if they could have their say in the matter, would be in favour of a legal restriction, and that the parents of those boys, who are all miners, but who are not hewing coals, if they could have an opportunity would also vote in that direction.

3577. That is your opinion of their opinion?—Oh yes, that is my opinion.

3578. Are you aware that Mr. Burt himself proposed in the present Mines Bill to increase the age at which boys are protected by law from 16 to 18?—Yes.

3579. Supposing that during the next depression of trade the employers of Northumberland would again demand that the hours of those boys should be put back to 11, is there any additional power among the Northumberland miners now beyond what there was in 1879 to prevent these hours being increased?—Not that I know of.

3580. If Mr. Burt had carried his object in bringing up the age of the boys to be regulated by this Bill to 18, would they not have been safe?—I think so.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

3581. That is to say the employers then could not increase their hours of working?—I think that if it was made legal for it to be so, they could not prevent it; but they would prevent it otherwise.

3582. So that if Mr. Burt had carried his object, in which we all agree with him, and had raised the age for boys from 16 to 18, it would have prevented the employers raising the age whatever price they might offer?—Yes.

3583. Do you agree that that should be attempted again; is it your opinion that the age for those boys should be advanced from 16 to 18?—Yes.

3584. Or to 21?—Well, I would prefer 21, but I would take 18 as an instalment towards 21.

3585. Would you agree to place in a new Mines Bill instead of the limit of 16 a limit of 21 years of age?—Yes.

3586. You would agree to it?—Yes, decidedly.

3587. Now upon the general employment of adult labour, what effect would that have in mines? Would not that have a tendency to limit the hours of adult labour?—I think it would practically bring about what we are striving for—an eight hours' labour day.

3588. But you are in favour of limiting the hours by law; so that after all you are not alone among the Northumberland miners?—No, far from it.

3589. We differ then on a question of degree and not in principle?—Yes.

Sir *William Lewis.*

3590. I think you admitted that your experience in steam-coal collieries is somewhat limited?—Yes.

3591. Have you taken the trouble to discuss your scheme with any experienced miners who have been working in deep pits where they have long roads between their pits and the faces?—I have been so anxious to elicit the views of all sections of miners, that I have given out challenges in a manner of speaking broadcast to the whole of the county of Northumberland and the whole of the county of Durham, to meet any of the opponents to the eight hours' measure in a public debate in a friendly spirit, with the view of eliciting their views and ascertaining what objections they had against it.

3592. My question is more with reference to your scheme than to the eight hours Bill. I mean your scheme of three shifts, and the division which you propose making in the time of the various persons employed underground. I want to know whether you have taken the trouble to discuss your scheme with people who have had experience in deep pits, and where they have long distances to get from the bottoms of the pits to the working faces?—I have endeavoured to discuss the question with as many as I could possibly meet, and I have asked

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

to work on, and if he assented to it, knowing it, I think it would be fair enough then.

3616. Yes, but we are now dealing with this before it is introduced?—Decidedly.

3617. In your experience as a pit man I have no doubt you have known many men who can earn as much in seven hours as another man can in eight or nine?—Yes.

3618. One man requires time; he may be older or not as strong as his neighbour. You propose to limit his earning power by restricting him to a certain number of hours a day that he is to work. Do you think that will be advantageous to the working men apart from the effect it may have upon the production of coal in general?—I think that it would be a decided benefit to each and every working man, both to the strong and to the weak.

3619. Then you refer to the question of meals. Is it or is it not the practice—take your own colliery, for instance—that men are allowed to suspend operations for their meals?—They are not allowed to suspend operations that I know of.

3620. Is it not the custom for the miners to suspend operations about half through the shift and take a bite of anything together?—Not the daytime workers.

3621. Take the night time?—The night-time workers do.

3622. Is it the practice to suspend winding operations for any number of minutes in the course of the day for your people to take their meals?—No.

3623. Are you speaking now for Durham as well as Northumberland?—I am saying what I know of Durham and what I know of Northumberland as well. I have been at several collieries in Durham, and I do not know of one where there is a suspension of drawing coals while the men take their meals. The mode that they have is that they generally have a spare hand or two, and they send one man to relieve another.

3624. Then, upon the subject of boys, do you think that 10*s.* would be offered to boys if there were abundance of them in the Walker Colliery?—No, I think that 10*s.* a day is a very exceptional thing.

3625. Still it was offered in consequence of the scarcity of boys for performing certain services?—It was given as well as offered; but I believe why it was given was because they could not get anybody to do it for less.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

3626. I understand that you propose to make it penal if a man or a youth works more than eight hours under ground in the day?—Yes.

3627. Do you consider that the number of hours now worked are injurious to the health or the safety of the persons employed under ground?—I consider that the hours now worked are not so conducive to safety as they would be if they were shortened.

3628. Do you think they are unsafe?—I am not prepared to say exactly unsafe.

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

3629. Do you consider that the men are unhealthy in consequence of working the number of hours they now do?—I may say from my own experience, if I may speak as a representative, that I have sometimes; nay, I may say frequently when I have been compelled to work day by day successively, and to work the full time, such has been the excess of toil and the amount of perspiration that I have given off, that at the latter end of the week I have been so worn down and fatigued and incapacitated that I have been obliged to stay at home to recoup my strength and energy.

3630. How many hours were you speaking of then?—When I was a coal hewer I was working seven hours.

Chairman.

3631. At the face?—No, from bank to bank.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

3632. That is your own experience?—Yes, and I may say it is the experience of a good many more besides.

3633. Then you say that you would not allow anybody to be down more than eight hours?—Yes.

3634. Would you compel them to be down eight hours?—No.

3635. Nor any given number of days a week?—No.

3636. So that it would be unlawful for an employer to allow a man to be down for more than eight hours, but it would be optional for a man whether he would be down eight hours or not, or how many days a week he worked—is that what you mean?—No, I do not go so far as that.

3637. How far would you go?—I would certainly agree to have an understanding come to between the employers and the employed to this effect, that no man nor boy shall work more than eight hours, and that their time should reckon from bank to bank. If by arrangement any class of work could be done in less than eight hours I would not compel that class of men to stop down the whole of the eight hours. With regard to the number of days worked, I do think that the employers will be justified in insisting that each and every man and boy, when able, should attend to his work every day in the fortnight.

3638. How many days does that make?—The custom now is eleven days per fortnight, five in one week and six in another.

3639. I think you said, in answer to Mr. Balfour, that you consider after a time that the hewers would earn as much money in six hours as they now do in eight: how would that come about?—I can only surmise it would be so because it has been so.

3640. No, it has never come yet from eight to six: I want to know how that particular change is going to come about?—Because I cannot explain how that has come about, I feel that it is a difficult task for me to explain how it has

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Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

come about, but I recognise the fact all the same.

3641. I want to see about the fact. Must it not come about in one of two ways—either that the man works harder, or that he is paid more money. Must it not be one of those two ways?—I do not know that the man works any harder. I think that the whole of my experience as a miner is that hewers generally work as hard as they can, and I do not think a man can work any harder than he can.

3642. Then you are face to face with a difficulty, it seems to me?—Yes.

3643. How is it to come about?—After what I said about the idea of the working harder, I think it must come then by the owners paying more money.

3644. Did you hear what Mr. Weeks said, and have you read what some of the other Northumberland gentlemen and miners' representatives have said, that for about 12 years, up to 1889, the Northumberland miners were mostly losing money?—I may say that since I can remember taking any interest whatever——

3645. I want you to confine your attention to those 11 or 12 years, please?—I will as near as I can. I may say that these 11 or 12 years are included in the whole of my time, and I may say that is the general expression of colliery owners all over the northern district. We frequently hear that cry repeated. But then, of course, as the saying is in the North, it goes in at one ear and out at the other. We pay no heed to it; we do not believe it, in fact.

3646. You do not believe that they were losing money?—No, we think that they are not so foolish as to work the collieries at a loss.

3647. I suppose when a proprietor has started a colliery it is rather a serious thing to stop it, is it not?—We must admit that.

3648. It is a serious thing?—It is a serious thing.

3649. Then you tell us that you consider that the gentlemen and miners' representatives, who have come here and said that they consider the Northumberland collieries were working at a loss, have stated that which was not true?—We think it is not correct.

3650. The evidence is on record, and you say you do not believe it?—I did not say that individually, I did not believe it. I say that the class of men I represent generally discredit such statements.

3651. I want to know what your own opinion is at the moment, please?—My own opinion is this, that if we are to trust in the integrity of the gentlemen who have spoken it ought to be accepted until it can be proved to be otherwise.

3652. If you prevented a man from working more than eight hours a day would you make it penal for him to undertake any other employment during the rest of the 16 hours?—Am I to understand your question to mean after he has done with his day's work.

3653. I will put it again if you like, would you make it unlawful for a man to perform any other employment during the remaining 16 hours of the day?—Yes.

3654. Did I gather from you that you proposed that the day hands should be paid the same rate of wages for eight hours as for 10?—If they could get the same rate by all means I would urge them to take it, but I would prefer if they could not get it without a proportionate reduction, that they should take it with the reduction.

3655. Then in reality it seems to me that it would come to this, that the reduction in hours must come out of the pockets of the employer; is that not so or is that so?—Well, I think it would ultimately be so.

3656. Although we have it in evidence that for 11 or 12 years most of the collieries were losing money in Northumberland, do you think that is quite fair?—I cannot say that it is exactly fair.

Sir *E. Harland.*

3657. Do the hewers work by the day or by the piece?—By the piece.

3658. Then, if you propose that they shall work shorter hours, do I understand you to imply that they will have to be content with less wages unless the price of the piece-work be increased?—Yes.

3659. In your letter to the Commission you referred to one of the advantages of your scheme resulting in cheaper coal to the public?—Yes.

3660. How do you propose to produce cheaper coal in the market, if it is to be done by men working shorter hours, and, as you have already expressed your opinion, probably getting the same rate of wages for producing a less amount of material?—A less amount of material?

3661. I presume you will admit that if they work shorter hours they will hew a less amount of coal?—Per man, you mean, I suppose.

3662. Per thousand men, or per colliery if you choose?—I daresay that the amount per man might be less, but the aggregate day's work would be more, I think. My meaning is this, that while the colliery employed more hands the out-put would be greatly enhanced.

3663. Yes, but how do you feed and clothe the more hands which you admit by that statement will be necessary to produce a given amount of coal; where is the money to come from to feed and clothe the extra amount of hands when you are proposing to sell the coal in the market for a less price?—The amount of money would come direct from the employers in the shape of wages.

3664. Then how can the employer afford to sell the coal at a less price?—He gets a bigger quantity out for the running time of the machinery and the payment of day wages, &c.

3665. But I have understood from your replies already that in order to produce the same amount of coal you propose to increase the number of men employed, the same amount of coal, not an increased amount?—Yes, but I think I said also that my scheme would have a tendency to increase the amount of the output of coal.

Sir *E. Harland*—continued.

3666. How do you propose then that the amount shall be increased when it is by working fewer hours?—By more hands being employed and longer drawing hours.

3667. Then if you employ more hands have you not to pay more men?—Yes, but the owners get a bigger quantity of coal, and the profits on a bigger quantity to pay them with.

3668. Is not the total of the amount of coal that the owner has to sell the accumulation of each man's work and nothing more?—Yes, decidedly.

3669. Then if you have to pay each man more money for producing the same amount of coal how can the owner have more coal to sell, and if he have the same amount even to sell, how can he afford to sell it at the same price?—I can only reply to that by giving the statement of a colliery manager to myself, he said this: That when he had all his men at work each day in the week there was a certain amount of profit made out of their labours, but when he had a certain amount of hewers absent he had the same amount of daily wage men to pay, and consequently he was at a loss then.

3670. Am I to gather from that that the only advantage to the owner in this system of yours would be by compulsory legislation requiring the men to work, say, 11 days in a fortnight in place of less, as probably is the case at present?—I think the men would work 11 days per fortnight if their hours were shortened, without being compelled.

3671. Would the additional amount of money which the owner would by your scheme be called upon to pay be derived by him solely from the advantages that he would derive by more work being carried on in the pit?—Yes.

3672. That is to say, the reducing only of the fixed expenses of the mine, is that the only source from which you derive any extra income by which to pay any extra wages to the men?—That may be cited as one. It is the only one I can work out in my own mind at the present time, but I think that they are sharp enough to institute other means of saving besides these.

Mr. *Tait.*

3673. In your reply to the Chairman you said that you were particularly favourable to an eight-hours' day for the purpose of preventing strikes, and instanced your own case in the strike of 1887?—I do not remember having said that I was in favour of it for the purpose of preventing strikes. I think what I said was that I could only see that either a strike or a law must bring it to pass, and I preferred the law to the strike.

3674. Then in reply to Mr. Trow you stated that while you are favourable to having a legal enactment to reduce the working day, you are not prepared to say that Parliament in its wisdom should state what should be the wages paid for that working day?—I think if an agitation was to get up in favour of the State regulating wages the same as it is in regulating

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

the hours that they might do it, but until then I think there is no need to interfere with it.

3675. During these last ten years you have paid some great attention to the trade disputes which have occurred throughout the whole of the country, I have no doubt?—Well, I have paid some.

3676. I think I would be correct in saying that 75 per cent. of these strikes have either been against a reduction of wages or demanding an advance of wages?—I think what you say may be accepted as pretty near the mark. Of course I have not gone into it, and I do not know.

3677. Therefore, if you think that legal enactment would prevent strikes in regard to the hours of labour, the same argument would apply to the purpose of preventing strikes regarding reductions or advances in wages?—I think if it had the effect in one it would have the effect in the other most certainly.

3678. When you speak of a legal day, do you mean what is generally understood in workmen's circles as the legal optional day—that you would not force it upon a particular trade unless the trade desired it?—I almost prefer the trade raising an objection to it rather than seeking it.

3679. Assume that a majority of the members of a trade were against a legal day, would you still say that you would force that legal day upon them?—Not if a very strong majority were against it; but I would not prevent it being operative by simply a bare majority.

3680. In Northumberland the miners have agreed to the principle of an eight-hour day?—I think they are agreed to it.

3681. Only they have not agreed to your satisfaction to the principle of a legal eight-hours' day?—That is so.

3682. During the course of your membership of your Union, have you ever carried a resolution in your lodge or club-room which, in the ordinary sense, should have been sent on to your Association to be discussed, and which has not appeared upon the programme?—I have not tried very much.

3683. You have no case of that kind where you have carried a resolution and there has been any interference with it in getting to its legitimate source?—No.

3684. The Chairman read a letter to-day from Mr. McKay from Gosforth, and in it that gentleman states that you are entitled to speak their views before the Commission. May I ask you whether the proposal which you have here for reducing the miners to six hours, and the boys' labour down to the hours which you have laid down, has been in front of this league which Mr. McKay is the secretary of, have you discussed it with them?—It was circulated before the league was formed, and of course they were acquainted with it before we formed ourselves into that league.

3685. But since they were a league your proposals, as you have laid them before the Commission to-day, have [illegible] them?—No, no

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

3686. Therefore, that part of your proposal which refers to the altered system of working cannot be said to have emanated from this league?— No.

3687. Could you tell us the membership of it?—I cannot at the present time, Mr. McKay is officiating as the secretary, and I have not asked him how many have responded to his appeal, but I do not think there are very many.

3688. You said it was formed after the congress?— Yes.

3689. The congress passed a resolution in favour of what is known as the legal optional day?—Yes.

3690. Can you tell me whether the league goes upon that basis or whether it goes upon the universal basis of an eight-hours' day?— As far as I can gather the opinions of those whom I have met belonging to that league they are similiar to my own. What they want is a shorter working day for those who work for eight hours, and they will assist any measure or any means of getting it, but they, like myself, have thought it cannot be arrived at except we have to go on strike for it, or legislate for it, and they prefer legislation, like myself.

3691. Seeing that the letter will be put in with the evidence as having been sent to the Secretary, and though the Secretary read by our Chairman, it is very necessary that we should have it on record from you, now that we have received this letter, whether this league is conducted on the legal optional system or the universal system, so that the Commissioners may determine at a future period how they would summarise your own statement and this letter which has been sent?—I may say it is not conducted on any of them precisely —we have not decided which of the lines we shall go upon.

3692. Therefore, the whole thing is indefinite so far as these things are concerned?—Yes it is quite young you know; it has only been formed since the trade congress was over.

Mr. *Austin*.

3693. Referring to the meetings held in 1887 and 1888, which were in favour of an eight-hours' day, were these meetings fully representative of the miners of Northumberland?— They were what we termed delegate meetings. A delegate was sent from each lodge to attend that meeting, and with definite instructions how to vote for and how to vote against the various resolutions which had to come before that meeting.

3694. was it voting by ballot or open voting?—It was by a show of cards; each delegate receives a card with a large figure printed on it indicating the number of votes he is entitled to, according to the membership he represents.

Mr. *Austin*—continued.

3695. At those meetings, in your opinion, did they come to that conclusion mainly on account of the hours of the boys?—I could scarcely say that offhand. I find that in 1887, on May 21st, a resolution, which does not seem to take in that idea, was voted upon It reads that *no man* shall work more than seven hours per shift, and it is also says that no pit shall draw coals more than 10 hours per day, and that it come into force on the first Saturday in July. So that I am ready to think that resolution had no reference whatever to the hours of the boys, but referred to the hours of the workmen generally.

3696. In the short space of time that elapsed between 1888 and 1889, to what do you attribute the action of the miners in reversing their two previous decisions?—The attitude that the leaders are taking.

3697. The attitude that the leaders are taking?—Yes.

3698. What attitude have the leaders taken in that respect?— They have taken a decidedly opposing attitude to a legal eight hours' day.

3699. Against it?—Yes.

3700. The leaders?—Yes, what I mean by the leaders are the men who take a leading part, such as those who constitute the committees, the agents, and such like in the county.

3701. What evidence have you in support of that?—I can only say that what evidence I have in support of that is that until they began to speak and to go against the measure generally the men nearly every time recorded their votes in favour of a shorter day, and since they have done so the men have voted against it.

3702. What are the working hours of the boys at present?—Those from 12 to 16 years of age have 10 hours, and from 16 to 21 years of age 10 hours also, but there are a few exceptions for boys who may be working on engine-planes and inclines and such like, where they may be required to work 10½ hours per day.

3703. In your opinion, have these hours interfered with the health of the boys?—I cannot say that they have interfered with the health.

3704. Do you think the boys would be better off if they had shorter hours?—It is reasonable to think they would.

3705. They would have more time to study, I suppose, and relaxation?—Yes.

3706. Socially they would be better, do you think?—I think so.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. John Weir called and examined.

Chairman.

3707. You are the secretary of the Fife and Kinross Miners' Association?—Yes.

3708. What is the number of collieries in that district?—Forty-two.

3709. What is the number of men employed?—about 8,000.

3710. Both underground and surface included?—Underground only.

3711. Can you give me the total number of men employed?—I could not give you the actual number, but there are about 9,500 above and below ground.

3712. What is the output of that district?—It is upwards of three million tons per year.

3713. Are most of those so employed members of the Union that you represent?—Yes, of the underground workers.

3714. Most of the 8,000, you say, are members of your Union?—There will be upwards of 7,000 who are members of the Union.

3715. Is there an Employers' Association in the same district?—Yes.

3716. What are the relations of the Employers' Association with your Association?—I may say the relations are very friendly, but we have no direct connexion further than holding friendly conferences by representatives from each Association when there is any matter in dispute.

3717. You have no joint committee?—We have no joint committee.

3718. Therefore, your relationships have reference more to district questions probably than to local questions?—Precisely. We have sometimes local questions under consideration by deputations from each Association.

3719. Have you any sliding scale?—We have no sliding scale.

3720. Wages are therefore merely matters of agreement from time to time?—Exactly.

3721. Have you had any strikes in that district lately?—We have had no strikes of any magnitude. We had some little dispute about the beginning of 1888. The employers enforced a reduction of 10 per cent., and the men knowing well that they could not fight the employers through the medium of a strike, declared a fortnight's holiday as a protest against the reduction.

3722. Do you mean one fortnight of fourteen consecutive days?—Yes. A large number of the men kept the holiday faithfully up to near the end of the fortnight. The employers posted up a notice that unless the men were returning to their work within the fortnight, those that did not return to their work would be locked out. That had a considerably demoralising effect upon the men, and a considerable number of them resumed work. There would be, I think, about 2,000 or thereby who stood faithful to their pledge, kept their fortnight's holiday, and were locked out for another week, when the employers opened the pits again. That is the only thing in the nature of a strike that we have had in the district since, I think, 1877.

Chairman—continued.

3723. Since then you have gone on harmoniously?—We have managed to get along without anything in the shape of a strike. One little colliery had, I think, about ten days of a strike, but then it had no material effect upon the district. It was in connexion with a claim for an advance of wages, and in this colliery the advance was not conceded along with the rest, and the men struck work, and were out something like ten or eleven days, when the advance was conceded.

3724. What are the working hours of the hewers and of other underground men?—The working hours of the underground men are eight.

3725. From bank to bank?—No, not from bank to bank.

3736. Can you tell us what the hours are from bank to bank?—I should fancy if you were allowing about half and hour or three quarters of an hour more that would be about the average time the miners would be working underground there; that is from bank to bank.

3727. Eight hours and three quarters or so from bank to bank?—Or 8½ from bank to bank.

3728. Are those hours the hours of the hewers?—They are the hours of all underground workers—boys, men, and off-hand men.

3729. There are no different hours kept by the off-hand men as we call them?—Well, you will probably have the bottomers a little longer in consequence of having to be down first and to come up last; but these, I think, are about the only underground workers who would have longer hours than the rest, but our rule is eight hours working at the face.

3730. What are the coal-drawing hours?—The very same.

3731. They must be a little longer, if it is only because they have to draw the men out?—Winding coal in the shaft you mean?

3732. Yes?—They commence to wind coal at 6 o'clock in the morning, they stop at 9 o'clock, and have 30 minutes for breakfast, and winding coal would generally stop within a quarter past 2 in the afternoon, so that you have scarcely eight hours' winding.

3733. The only stoppage is that between 9 and half past?—Yes.

3734. Then as to the surface men, what are their hours; the main body of the surface men I mean?—Of course there are a great number of women employed at the pit heads and in Fife there would be upwards of 300, if I am not mistaken. I could not give you the actual figures. These people are employed from 6 o'clock up to 4 in the afternoon, I think.

3735. About 10 hours?—Yes, I could not be positive for all the collieries, so far as that is concerned.

3736. You desire, I understand, to make some observations upon the effects of requiring to give 14 days notice?—Yes. We have con-

Chairman—continued.

3750. Do you wish to say anything further on that question, or have you told us all that you think it is necessary, or all that you desire to state on that subject?—I think I have touched upon all the evils that arise from that.

3751. You have here an entry of deductions for dross and foreign matter found amongst coal. Of course, if you regard it as important to make a statement on that subject, do so, but please do it rather briefly?—I will be very brief. In regard to deductions for dross in our locality that is somewhat peculiar. Deductions are made for that class of coal by what is known as "Billy Fairplay."

3752. That is, paying for round only?—Well, until recently we received nothing for this dross until the House of Lords decided that it was held to be mineral contracted to be gotten. We held a conference with the employers subsequent to that decision, and agreed to a certain percentage of the dross to be paid for. All dross found among the material above that percentage was reckoned to arise from improper filling, and whatever is above that percentage goes for nothing; that is to say, the men receive no payment for it. These percentages are 11 per cent. in our hardest seam, 18 per cent. in our medium, and 20 per cent. in the softer seams.

3753. And any dross in excess of those percentages would not be paid for?—Precisely.

3754. And by dross of course you mean, from your reference to the House of Lords decision, not impurities, but fuel finding a market?—Good saleable coal. As to the deductions for foreign material, I may say that that is done precisely in the terms of the Mines Regulation Act. The weigher and check-weigher—where there is a check-weigher appointed—decide between themselves as to what deductions are to be made for impurities. We have no scale or anything of that kind to regulate it; simply the judgment of the weigher and the check-weigher.

3755. Have you before you the Commission's set of questions addressed to the Trades Unions?—Yes.

3756. You wish to offer some statements in reference to the question marked K. on page 4; that refers to the dismissal of representative delegates, does it not?—Yes.

3757. What do you wish to say on the subject of the dismissal of representative delegates; the refusal of unionists to work with non-unionists, and the use of a black list?—I would just like to make that a little clearer than it is possible to do in the answers to the questions by Trades Unions. We have no interference with representative delegates. The only case during the 11 years that I have been secretary for the Union which has come under my observation as to anyone being victimised was the party who was connected with what was termed our "Billy Fairplay" case in the Court of Session. There were two pursuers——

3758. Unless necessary, I think I would not mention any particular person, or so on?—I will not mention that.

Chairman—continued.

3759. I daresay you were not going to do so. All that we want is this: You have told us that you have only had one case in 11 years; well, of course that is what we are chiefly concerned to know, and it is so satisfactory a condition of things that it would not be worth while in regard to that one case mentioning any names in regard to which the person reflected upon might think he ought to come here and have his say. This Commission has a good deal of work to get through, and one wants as much as possible to keep our inquiries to that which really is needful, and therefore one would rather deprecate mentioning any names which would entail upon us the necessity of hearing the person reflected upon?—It is a matter of very little importance I admit, but I was only going to put it fairer than you are putting it for the employers.

3760. Very well, go on?—As to the use of a black list, I do not know anything of the kind in our district, further than this, that when any dispute arises such as the local dispute that I have previously referred to, affecting a number of men, the employers in the county refuse to employ these men at their collieries until the dispute is arranged or settled. That is the only near approach that I know of to a black list in our district.

3761. That is, they will not draw away the men between whom and their employer for the moment there is a dispute with a suspension of work?—Precisely, and that refusal to employ them extends over a number of weeks, probably after the arrangement of the dispute. For example, when we had these two weeks' holidays that I referred to, no employer would engage the men at another colliery for a definite time after the lock-out finished.

3762. I see you desire to give evidence upon the tenure of colliery houses?—The colliery houses form part of the contract of service. When you finish your contract of service you are expected to leave the house. We consider this a little hardship.

3763. Does the occupant pay rent?—Yes, there is only one colliery in Fife where no rents are charged, and that only affects some 250 or thereby. We consider this is a hardship, and particularly when it is a matter of dispute between employer and workman; that is to say, if the workman wants higher wages, and because he does not receive these higher wages he stops work, the employer has the right to turn him out of his house, and has threatened to do so in many instances. Our contention is that so long as we pay the rent, and so long as these houses are not required for other workmen, an employer ought not to have the power to evict the men from their houses.

3764. Do the houses generally belong to the owner of the colliery or are they leased by him?—In most cases they belong to the colliery owner, sometimes they are leased.

3765. Do you see any difficulty in deciding whether they are wanted for other men or not?—I see no difficulty in that. I quite admit

Chairman—continued.

3781. But you now are of opinion, you and those whom you represent, that it would be expedient that underground labour should be by law limited to eight hours?—Yes, they hold a strong opinion, and that opinion of course is grounded on the fact of their having the experience of 20 years of that system, although it has been got by trade union effort.

3782. Would you make the legislation operative upon the vote of a majority or any given proportion of the trade; or non-operative if a certain proportion declared against it. You heard Mr. Tait speak probably of what is called the optional eight hours?—Yes. I rather prefer the men to have the right to say whether they would or would not have an eight-hours' day.

3783. I think my questions have exhausted all the points upon which you expressed in writing a wish to give evidence. Is there anything you wish to volunteer before the members of the Commission ask you questions?—I do not know whether it would be considered important, or of any value at all, but we have a system of pay lines in our district which hampers the men very seriously. These pay lines are drawn up in the form of a clear receipt, and if a workman conceives that any error is in his wages and signs this pay line and uplifts these wages, this pay line bars him against taking any action to recover what he considers the balance of wages due to him. We have had cases in court which have brought out this point clearly.

3784. Perhaps in order to understand that you would just say whether on the man presenting himself at the pay window on a pay day there is tendered to him one of those forms with a stamp on it for him to sign before the money is passed across the counter to him—is that so?—Yes.

3785. Without the opportunity being afforded to him to examine it—is that so?—No, he has an opportunity of examining the line.

3786. What opportunity?—He may have had it for some time in his possession before the pay.

3787. Then perhaps you had better first describe the system—that is to say at what period of the week in reference to the ensuing pay day would he receive this note?—He receives it on the same day as he receives the wages as a rule.

3788. How does he receive it?—He receives it at the pay office.

3789. Goes for it?—Goes for it.

3790. Has it handed to him?—Yes.

3791. That not being the occasion on which he is to have the money also?—You are quite right.

3792. Then he passes out—he passes away?—He passes out.

3793. And then he returns for his money at a later period of the day?—Yes, and states that he is short so much—say 10*s.* short of his wages.

Sir *John Gorst.*

3794. I see on one of those pay lines which you have produced that the receipt is altered. "Received the above sum of 10*l.* 9*s.* 9*s.* being "part payment of wages due to me to and "with this date"?—I am glad you have pointed that out because that is the very system I refer to; the pay line is altered and they will not receive it.

3795. I mean if a man is allowed upon protest to sign a receipt in part payment only of his wages, it would not be any bar to his bringing an action for the residue?—Exactly; we present that line as altered there, but the coal-owner will not have it.

Chairman.

3796. That receipt apparently has not been given up, or it would not be in your possession?—That is so.

3797. Then he returns later?—Yes, and states that he wants 10*s.* more wages; they dispute that: of course the man probably is in dire need of his wages; he has no alternative in some instances but to sign the lists and uplift his wages though his claim, or his alleged claim, is entirely gone or his chance of getting it.

3798. Does this happen often?—Frequently.

3799. Do you mean that it happens often that a man is denied the opportunity of having his rectification looked into?—No; it does not invariably happen, you know.

3800. I did not say invariably; I said often?—No; if he makes out a case that it is a genuine mistake or anything of that kind, I have no doubt the money will be paid in most instances notwithstanding.

Sir *John Gorst.*

3801. I should like to ask you whether, if a man tenders a receipt in the form in which that is altered, in that case his wages would be refused him or have been refused him?—They have been refused.

Chairman.

3802. Then what really would happen is this: that if in the majority of cases, notwithstanding his having first said that there was an error, and then taken his money and given a receipt, he pressed for an investigation, and it was found or at least it was in the opinion of the representative of the colliery found not to be an error, he would be unable to seek a legal remedy?—That is precisely the position.

Sir *John Gorst.*

What appears to me is this, that according to this witness's statement the employer refuses to pay the man the wage he admits is due to him, unless he will sign a receipt which covers all that is due to him; he takes upon himself the right to demand a release from any further claim before he will pay that which he admits to be due.

Chairman.

That is so; in other words the employer says, "I will only pay you the amount upon your giving me a receipt in full."

The Witness.

Precisely.

Chairman.

Perhaps it is also due for us to remember as the witness says, that in the majority of cases, that would not bar the employer or the employer's clerk from following up the allegation that there is an error and rectifying it, if in the opinion of the clerk it was proved, but it would shut out the man if the clerk did not agree that it was an error from seeking legal remedy.

The Witness.

Precisely; that is exactly how I wish to put it.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

3803. Has the legality of the employer's proceedings ever been tested in a court of law?—No, it has not as yet, but we are endeavouring as soon as we can get a case which can be brought into court to test this very point; that is, whether it is legal on the part of the employer to refuse a receipt amended, as has been read by one of the Commissioners.

Chairman.

3804. Is a stamp always required to be put on it?—Not always.

3805. Where it is an amount in excess of 2*l.*?—Yes, a stamp is required then.

3806. Who finds the stamp?—The workman—the workman has to pay for it.

3807. Is there any other point that you wish to bring before us?—I do not think there is.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

3808. You say you have no joint committee established in your district?—No.

3809. Have you ever felt the want of that?—I cannot say that we have felt the want of it. If we had had it, and then lost it we might have felt the want of it.

3810. But have disputes arisen which you think might have been prevented by a joint committee or at least diminished in number?—I believe that would be the case, but our practice is practically on the lines of a joint committee. When anything is to be arranged a deputation of coal owners, say seven in number, meet a deputation of miners, of the same number and discuss the various questions.

3811. Is that done with regard to local questions as well as with regard to district questions?—It is only once that we have had a committee of both associations upon a local matter. It mainly applies to district matters—matters affecting the whole county.

3812. What then is the method adopted for the settlement of local disputes?—The method adopted is generally by sending deputations from the men of the locality in which the dispute occurs to the manager and probably I go along with them and try to get it arranged.

3813. Has it ever been suggested that a sliding scale should be adopted in the Fife district?—Oh! yes, it has been suggested several times, but we never could agree upon a basis.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

3814. You have made endeavours to agree?—Endeavours have been made, but they all failed.

3815. Both the workmen and the employers would like to see a scale, provided they could agree upon a satisfactory basis; is that so?—I am not very sure as to whether there is a strong anxiety on the part of the workmen for a sliding scale. The reason why I say so is because of the want of finality in the sliding scales that have been in operation in other districts.

3816. You said that in 1888 the masters declared a reduction of wages and that that was not resisted by a strike because the men knew that a strike would be useless?—We knew that we were not strong enough to strike.

3817. Was that because you had not a good enough case to strike for?—We had a good case; we had not plenty of funds.

3818. It was the want of funds in the Union?—Yes, the want of strength in our Union.

3819. Had your Union been stronger in funds you would have attempted resistance by means of a strike if you could not have settled the question otherwise?—I do not know that we would.

3820. It is your wise endeavour in your district to avoid a strike if a strike can possibly be avoided?—We would rather have a strike on a modified scale than a large one.

3821. You would rather have a holiday?—Yes.

3822. Now with regard to a legal eight hours day. At present you work in the Fife district eight hours, not from bank to bank but at the face?—Yes, eight hours at the face is reckoned to be the rule by which we work, but I believe the average working at the face is considerably less than that in consequence of the stoppages that I have referred to. We stop 30 minutes for breakfast, so you will observe that eight hours at the face does not properly state the case.

3823. The legal eight hours then, would hardly affect your actual procedure in fact?—I do not think it would affect us very much.

3824. It would leave you very much as you are at present?—It would make a difference. We would have less trouble to keep obstreperous members from breaking away from the eight hours.

3825. Does that imply that there are a considerable number of your men who would desire to work more than eight hours if the Union permitted them to do so?—I do not say a considerable number but I have referred already to instances where contractors have a tendency to work extra hours in consequence of their having extra interest in working overtime.

3826. But do you think any serious harm would result from a certain number of men working more than eight hours?—I think so.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

3827. Whom would it injure?—It would injure the men themselves, and it would create an irritation among other men and probably lead to larger numbers following the lead of those who were working more than eight hours to the general detriment of the district.

3828. But if there was a general disinclination to work more than eight hours would the hours of the unwilling majority be increased if a comparatively few were to set the example?—Well, there is a general disinclination to work more than eight hours a day or we would not have maintained it so long, and I believe, although there was an inclination on the part of a number of the men, it would take a long time for those men to operate before they would influence the rest of the men.

3829. But you think ultimately the fact that a few did work more than eight hours would cause others to do so?—There would be that danger I say, and it would give us greater difficulty to keep the whole body of the men working strictly to the eight hours.

3830. And you consider it would be a serious evil if they did work more than eight hours?—Most assuredly.

3831. Do you mean for their own sakes, that working more than eight hours a day is individually detrimental to men working underground?—It is for their own sakes, and I should say for the sake of the above ground workers as well.

3832. When you say for their own sakes you mean you think the union in fixing eight hours a day is a better judge of what is good for these men than they are themselves?—Well, there are a great many men whose opinion as to what is good for them is not to be relied upon.

3833. But in general you would prefer, would you not, to be allowed to manage your own household in these matters?—Well, we do so, but you would not say that an individual of a family would have a right to upset any family arrangement.

3834. But do you regard the miners of a district as strictly analogous to a family?—Well, it is an organisation the same as a family.

3835. You think the advantages of a uniform eight hours are so great that you would prevent by custom certainly and possibly also by law any individual from exceeding those hours?—I certainly would do so, most decidedly. I have a strong opinion upon that point.

3836. I pass on to the question of the universal eight hours day. I gather that the legal eight hours day would not affect you very much in Fife because you practically have only eight hours now, but the men of the Fife district are in favour of legislation with a view to securing the boon which they have already got themselves for other districts?—Miners, yes.

3837. I am speaking of miners. But now if you in Fife have been able to get an eight hours day by your own exertions, what makes you think it would be impossible for the miners in the west of Scotland to do the same?—Well, that is a hypothetical question. I can only speak from experience in that matter. I do not know what may prevent them in the future, but I know what prevented them in the past.

3838. What has prevented them in the past?—Opposition on the part of the employers, and the want of organisation among themselves.

3839. But in your own case there was opposition on the part of the employers?—But we had organisation.

3840. But would it not be better to wait until you have organisation in the west of Scotland?—We have waited 20 years and it is not formed yet.

3841. Then because these men are apathetic and decline to organise for their own benefit you would ask Parliament to interfere and act for them?—I would have no hesitation, because our experience has shown, and our employers agree with us, in saying that it has done no injury to the trade. Our experience has shown that it would be a good thing for these men.

3842. Pardon me. Your experience has shown, perhaps, that it is a good thing for you; it has not shown necessarily that it is a good thing for any other district?—If the district is similarly situated I do not see why it should not.

3843. If the district is similarly situated; but there is at least this difference between you and them, that you have succeeded and they have not succeeded. Would not the first inference from that be that the circumstances were not the same?—Well, probably not. It might be put different from "circumstances"; it might be put in this way, that the men and the employers are not the same.

3844. Does it not occur to you that the economic conditions in the west of Scotland may be different from those in Fife?—I cannot see it so far as the eight hours day would affect them. So far as economic circumstances are concerned, in Lanarkshire they are more favourably placed for an eight hours' day than even Fife is. They have thicker seams and easier got coals, and if they cannot work an eight hours day to advantage under such circumstances Fife could scarcely be expected to do so.

3845. If then they are economically at an advantage compared with Fife, have the miners in the west of Scotland a higher wages, or do the employers make larger profits?—That is a point I cannot speak to, because I have no information.

3846. But before we come to any decision upon a question so important as this, is it not essential that we should examine into the economical conditions of one district as compared with another?—I quite apprehend your point, but I am looking at the conditions under which coal is got there. It is got from seams that can be easier worked than those in Fife in most instances; that to my mind is a sufficiently

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

broad fact upon which to found an opinion that an eight hours' day could be worked with as great economic advantages in that locality as in Fife.

3847. But if that is so, and they are now working these longer hours, surely the inference must be that either the employers are obtaining more profits, or the workmen are receiving higher wages, or both?—That may be so, but I am not in a position to say. I do not know.

3848. But I infer from the difficulty of supposing this to be the case that in all probability the economic conditions are not so favourable in Fife as you represent them to be, and I want you to realise that difficulty too. Do you see what I mean?—I do not catch the point that you are making there.

3849. You say you believe from a consideration of the position of the coal seams and their thickness in the west of Scotland that an eight hours day could be as successfully worked there as it is in Fife. I say if that is so, how does it come about that it has not been adopted?—I have told you—from the opposition of the masters and the want of organisation and want of energy among the men.

3850. Then surely you assume the economic conditions are as favourable?—I do so.

3851. You assume it?—I have tried to point out that I consider that locality equally as favourable, if not more favourable, than Fife for carrying out an eight hours day.

3852. But you go upon nothing else than the position and thickness of the seams?—That is all I am going upon.

3853. Do you know anything about the rate of wages in the west of Scotland?—I do not know.

3854. Have you compared it with the rate of wages in Fife?—I have heard it stated, but I have not been in a position to verify these statements.

Mr. *Burt.*

3855. You have told me that by Trades Union effort you won 20 years ago, and have maintained practically eight hours in Fife?—Yes.

3856. During that 20 years the coal trade has fluctuated very much in Scotland as elsewhere?—It has.

3857. And reductions of wages have taken place repeatedly with a view to adjusting the wages to the prices and the condition of trade?—They have; very frequently I can assure you.

3858. And yet during all the vicissitudes of trade, and at times when the difficulties were greatest, you, surrounded by a comparatively disorganised district, or if not surrounded entering the same markets with comparatively disorganised men, have maintained the advantage that you won at that time by Union effort?—Yes; but I might be allowed to point out that apart altogether from Union effort, we are of opinion that the employers are quite convinced that their position would not be improved in the least by compelling us, even

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

under the most adverse circumstances, to go back to the longer hours. I have heard them state myself, at least some of them, that they had no desire to ask the men to go back from the eight hours to the longer hours, and as a matter of fact it is clearly demonstrated by our experience that the eight hours' system, both for employer and employed, has been a complete success economically.

3859. I am much obliged to you; you have put the case stronger than I did, and not at all in opposition to my point. You have not only maintained these advantages, but you have also overcome some of the preliminary difficulties in the way of obtaining that result by having succeeded in convincing the employers that the eight hours is the best system?—We have succeeded by persisting in working the eight hours, and they from experience have come round to our view.

3860. Does not that tell, so far as it goes, very strongly in favour of organisation as a method of obtaining an object of that kind?—Undoubtedly it goes a long way to say that it can be obtained if you have a certain class of men to deal with by organisation.

3861. Now, as bearing upon organisation, you made a remark (I think it was in answer to Mr. Balfour) to the effect that you had men who were exceedingly anxious to break away from the eight hours, and that if you once let them to do so and it went on probably that would result ultimately in the abandonment of the eight hours. I am not professing to give you the exact phraseology, but I gather from your answer that it is really the power of Union that maintains the eight hours at the present time?—I could not exactly concur in that view entirely, because our Union in the most adverse circumstances was very weak. We were down to a membership of something like 1,000 out of 5,000 then in the country. These 1,000 men could not regulate the hours or maintain the hours of the 5,000. My opinion is, however, after the experience we had for a number of years before our Union weakened, eight hours had fallen into a custom, and it got as embedded into the minds of the men that there is a strong sentiment in favour of it and in favour of maintaining it even if there were no Union in existence.

3862. Will you be kind enough to give an opinion upon this point. Will you say what you think the effect of an Eight Hours' Act of Parliament would be upon the Union. In other words, are there not men who now care for short hours and who would leave the Union probably if that object were attained and fixed by Act of Parliament?—I do not think it. My opinion is that, although the hours were regulated by an Act of Parliament, the Unions would have plenty of work to see that the law was respected so far as the eight hours were concerned, in the same manner as we have to see the Mines Regulation Act respected now, and also plenty of work in looking after the regula-

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

tion of wages and getting a fair share as prosperity comes on.

3863. I should like just to clear up exactly what you meant by the expression of opinion you made that you would leave the working men to have a say as to whether they would veto or object to an Eight Hours' Act. Would you intend that to refer to a whole trade or to a special district or locality connected with a trade?—It has never entered into my mind to limit that option to anything less than a trade, because take it as between district and district it might have a very serious effect on some districts as against others.

3864. Then it is fair to say (I am just wanting to elicit your opinion) that that is equivalent to stating that in Northumberland and Durham, where up to the present time there is evidence that there is a very strong objection to an Eight Hours Bill, even if an Act of the kind were passed the opinions of the men in that locality would reckon for nothing, that is, their opinions would be over-ridden by the Act of Parliament, and the eight hours' day would be forced upon them whether they would have it or not. Is that a fair interpretation of your view?—Well, if they are so hopelessly in the minority I cannot help it.

Chairman.

3865. That is to say that the trade which would have to exercise an option upon the passing of such a measure would be the coal trade of the United Kingdom?—Precisely.

3866. Not Fife and Kinross by itself, or Lanarkshire by itself, or Northumberland or Durham by itself?—Precisely.

3867. It would be the coal trade of the United Kingdom that would, in your opinion, be justified in declaring whether the Act was to become operative in respect of that trade?—Exactly, that is my view.

Mr. *Abraham.*

3868. With respect to the question of sub-contracting, what effect do you find that to have upon the employment of unskilled labour. Has it more a tendency to the employment of unskilled labour than direct employment has?—It has.

3869. Are these men that are contracting men of any means?—Most of them that I know are just the ordinary miners, not men of means or capitalists in any sense of the term.

3870. Have they the power of employing men themselves?—They have the power to a certain extent, but the men employed under them are bound to be held as being employed under the colliery company, and they cannot discharge from the colliery or get away from the colliery without either getting a written notice from the employer or giving a written notice to the employer.

3871. Have they any means of knowing if these men are men of experience, as required by the Mines Regulation Act?—We have no

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

examination to put these men through, but as a rule they may be held to be ordinary skilled miners. You will find here and there an instance or two where men are contractors who are not sufficiently skilled nor have sufficient stability in them to occupy such a position, but are, to a certain extent, in that position from mere influence under the management.

3872. That is what I wanted to get. Now, holding that position in a mine does it not increase the dangers of employment not only to himself but to those he employs as well?—Undoubtedly.

3873. Then from the point of safety as well as from the point of unfairness of wages and hours, it is very desirable that sub-contracting should be put down in mines?—Exactly, I hold that view.

3874. By what means do the employers come to know the men that happen to be in a dispute in your district. You have told us that they do not employ them. By what means do they come to know that they are men engaged in disputes?—I do not know exactly the means they have. I can tell you what the practice is, however.

3875. Very well?—When a dispute is on, if anyone goes to another colliery that is in the district where the dispute arises and asks for employment he is asked which colliery, or where, he comes from. If he says that he comes from this colliery in dispute he is refused work, and should he say, to get work, that he comes from somewhere else, as soon as it is discovered that he has got it under false pretences, he gets his discharge. That is all I can say as to the means—by telling you the practice.

Sir *Edward Harland.*

3876. You referred to the worker's houses, and some little dissatisfaction about them. I suppose most of the worker's houses are pretty much of the same character in construction and equally good and worth all of them pretty much the same rent?—No. There is a great difference as to the quality of the houses. We have houses that have been in existence probably for 50 years still occupied in some of our collieries. These houses are far from being what they ought to be from a sanitary point of view. The new houses that are being built, however, are built on a different plan altogether, they are higher rented and give greater satisfaction in every way. But there are great differences in the houses.

3877. Let us, for my object, take one of the new houses of a given standard of comfort and sanitary arrangements. What in your mind would such a house be worth in rent if it were offered to one of the public—not one working in the colliery?—It would be worth as much, I daresay, as it would be worth to the miner if the house was suitable.

3878. But how much do you think the owners of the house could in the open market receive or expect to receive for it from a tenant

Sir *Edward Harland*—continued.

that tenant not being one of the workers in the mine?—That depends on the situation of the colliery. We know of collieries where the same rent is paid by members of the public, if I may put it that way, as is paid by the miners.

3879. Not more paid?—No more paid; just the same rent.

3880. Then do I gather from that that the collier who rents the house pays for it a fair full rent, a rent which the owner, if the collier did not offer himself to rent it, would receive from one of the public not a worker in the colliery?—I think so; he pays a reasonable rent as a rule.

3881. Then from that I gather that the collier derives no particular favour from the amount of rent which he pays?—None in the least, only in this one colliery that I have referred to, employing I think about 200 men or thereabouts; probably more. They have what are called free houses, but on inquiry it would be found that they were the dearest houses in the county, because it is reckoned, at least it is stated so, that these men have to work for 6*d.* less per day than men in other collieries in the county in consequence of having these houses free.

3882. You expressed an objection, a decided objection in fact, to the contractors working more time and earning, no doubt, consequently, more money than would otherwise be the case if they confined themselves strictly to eight hours work?—Yes.

3883. You objected to, shall I say the chief contractor, the head contractor working an hour or two, or half an hour even afterwards, to adjust little appliances, so that next day the work would be able to be carried on with more advantage to him?—It would not always follow. That work could be done within the eight hours if he was doing it properly.

3884. But suppose he had not done it, and that he had come to the bank, do you think he could have better employed himself for the other eight hours before he went to bed?—Yes; if he had employed somebody else to do the work that he was doing after the time was up.

3885. Then in that case would there be any labour saved; would not that be deputing another man to do what you could do yourself?—Yes; but if you had done plenty already, I think it is only right that another man should do what was to be done.

3886. But is not every man the best judge of when he has done plenty?—I have said "No" already to that.

Mr. *Tait.*

3887. I think that you represent the strongest Miners' Union that there is in Scotland?—Yes, I think so.

3888. The most perfectly organised body of miners there?—Yes.

3889. And that the feeling of the members of your society in Fife, notwithstanding that they

Mr. *Tait*—continued

have been able to get an eight hours day for themselves, is to assist the miners in Lanarkshire, in Ayrshire, and in Stirlingshire, to get the same benefit as they have?—Yes.

3890. Hence the reason of your coming to the decision of asking Parliament to interfere. Now, employment in Fife is not so changeable as in Lanarkshire?—Well, I do not think it is. We work on, I think, more steady, generally speaking.

3891. The miners are not so migratory in your district as they are in the others which I have named, there is more steady employment?—That is so, and I attribute that to the habits formed by the working of the shorter day.

3892. I was going to say you could easily understand that no miners if they can get a situation in Fife at eight hours a day would work in Lanarkshire for nine or ten hours a day. You will understand that as secretary, for you will have had many applications I suppose for employment in Fife from other districts owing to the favourable conditions in Fife?—We have a great many men coming from other localities getting employment. In fact, just now we never saw the county so full of what we call men from other districts,—strangers.

3893. You mentioned that, notwithstanding that the men worked eight hours a day, the boys also in Fife only worked eight hours a day?—Yes.

Chairman.

The reference to their working eight hours on the face I think a little led us to lose sight of the fact that they really have eight and a half hours from bank to bank.

The *Witness.*

That is so.

Mr. *Tait.*

3894. But the statement was also made that they took half an hour for their meals (*to the witness.*) There has never been any disposition on the part of the employers to increase the boys' hours?—None that I am aware of.

3895. And you have stated already that the masters themselves inclined to keep the mens' hours at what they are presently. Now, in making a reference to the conditions of employment, you complained about the 14 days' notice. Have you ever asked the employers to reduce that?—We have not tackled the question seriously

3896. Not as a conference?—Not as a conference, because we have always been told privately by the employers that they were against making any alteration in those conditions of employment.

3897. Of course I have had some of these things through my hands coming from the part of the country where you belong. There is in one of these terms of contract "that the em-"ployer shall deduct for the sharpening and "repairing of tools," certain amounts from the miner. Are you aware that that is a violation

Mr. *Tait*—continued

of the Truck Act, 1887?—No deduction for repairing tools or sharpening picks can be made a condition of employment.

3898. I also notice upon one of the pay lines sent to me from a colliery in Fife, that after tabulating the amounts of payment due to the men they say "received payment of the above balance"—of so much—"being payment in full of all wages due to me up to this date." Did I rightly understand you in answer to Sir John Gorst to say that if you had the words "in part payment" put in there it would be satisfactory to you until such time as you got that examination made which you explained to the chairman relative to your legal position. Do you think the words "in part payment" would give you a legal standing?—I think so.

3899. In this line also I notice that they ask the man to sign that he shall allow the employer to deduct from him certain amounts for sharpening and repairing of tools, and they also state at the back that they request their workmen "to "make themselves fully conversant with the "various abstracts of the Coal Mines Regulation "Act and the special rules and general regula-"tions for conditions of employment." Have you ever tested any case regarding the repairing of tools and the illegal keeping of moneys from any of your men?—We have tested cases, but not for repairing tools.

3900. Not for that one particular thing?—No.

Mr. *Tait.*

Mr. Weir did not refer to a question relating to the Employers' Liability Act, but having in my possession the rules and regulations of the Blair Hall Colliery Company, I would with your permission, sir, like to ask Mr. Weir one question with regard to Article 20 of those rules and regulations.

Chairman.

Very good.

Mr. *Tait.*

3901. Article 20 says, "All workmen, whether "directly in the employment of the said com-"pany or under contractors present or future "for the company, shall be held to be engaged "under the expressed stipulation and agreement "that they shall have no claims against the said "company or any partner or partners thereof, "or against the managers for any accident or "injury they may sustain if the same shall have "occurred through their own carelessness or "neglect of duty on the carelessness of the "contractor or those employed by such con-"tractor or that of any fellow workmen." Would you give the members of the Commission an idea what is the feeling of the miners in Fife regarding such a clause as this being put into their conditions of service and what are their ideas with reference to any change being made in the Employers' Liability Act as to employers contracting themselves out of responsibilities?—The feeling is distinctly against a clause of that kind being put into any conditions of employment. Fortunately for the men of Fife a clause of that kind is not in the conditions affecting Fife proper. The conditions of the Blair Hall Colliery Company apply only to the Coltness Iron Company's colliery, and they only affect about 200 of our men belonging to the Union.

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

3902. But on the other hand it would be quite competent for the other employers of Fife to have a similar clause which would affect the whole of the county?—I think we would fight it then.

3903. It is not a question of fighting it; it is a question of the alteration of the law. Mr. Balfour asked you if you knew the wages paid in Lanarkshire. You did not state to the Commission what were the wages paid in Fife, and in view of getting Lanarkshire wages before the Commission it would perhaps be as well that you should give the Commission before you go an idea of the wages paid in Fife at present, so that we may make a comparison?—So far as I can form an opinion I believe the average wages in Fife just now will be from 6*s.* 3*d.* to 6*s.* 6*d.* a day.

Mr. *Abraham.*

3904. Just one question with regard to the inspection of mines by Her Majesty's inspectors. Do you find that mines are frequently inspected or not?—I do not think they are too frequently inspected, and I believe these inspections are made chiefly when accidents happen. There are I know a good many inspections made otherwise, but I believe the majority of inspections made by Government inspectors are made when an accident occurs or a complaint is made.

3905. Is it desirable from the point of view of safety to life and property as well in your district that the inspectors should be increased?—I think so. I think it is highly desirable. In fact, while speaking of inspections I may point out that we had a prosecution recently of some men who had gone past the station at which they should receive the report from the inspector who makes the inspection on behalf of the owner; they had gone past the station before receiving a report from the inspector as firemen that all was safe. I am inclined to think that that system of inspection is not carried out so fully and efficiently as it ought to be

3906. On the other hand do your own men avail themselves of the power given them by the Act to inspect the collieries for themselves?—They do. We have had several inspections this year.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

3907. In answer to a question by Mr. Burt you said that if Parliament gave the majority of the men in a trade the right to fix the hours of labour you would make the whole trade and not the district the unit. Was not that so?—Yes.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

8. And you gave a reason for that?—

). You said that otherwise different dis- might adopt different hours of labour and district might be placed at a disadvantage npared with another?—That is possible.

0. That was what I understood to be answer?—Yes; that was possible, I said.

1. But is not one district at present at a vantage as compared with another in so far ey work different hours?—Well, yes, that

2. Then would not the effect of an uniform hours day be arbitrarily to alter the t balance of advantage and disadvantage different districts?—Well, if the advan- exists. In the districts where long hours orked if they had that advantage long h in my opinion.

3. But would it not be a great hardship to alter the balance of advantage and vantage?—I really do not think so.

4. You do not think it would throw a number of men out of work in particular cts which are adversely affected?—I do now how it might affect the north of nd.

5. But would not that be a very serious leration if the consequence I have indicated to ensue?—I cannot see how it would e in the way that you indicated by ing men out of employment. My notion opposite way.

6. In this way. If one district was placed erious disadvantage it would mean that a number of pits in that district would have closed, and the result would be that a number of men now at work in that t would be thrown out of work?—Well, had a result of that kind that would be tural outcome—the throwing of the men but I have a different opinion as to what sult would be.

7. But when you replied to Mr. Burt that ferent districts were allowed to fix their differently, one district might be placed disadvantage as compared with another, plied that the difference of hours might tute an advantage or a disadvantage. Now ifference exists at present. Therefore, at t one district according to your view must t respect be at an advantage as compared another district?—Well, that is so to a n extent, although I believe there are other ervailing advantages. For example, the of Scotland works long hours and we eight hours, yet the employers in our t always complain that they are handi- d with the long hours in the west. We to that by saying, you have a steadier of men; they work with more energy and constantly than they possibly would do if r hours prevailed; consequently from the ness of your service you are able to recoup elves for any disadvantages you may ience in connexion with the districts that longer hours.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

3918. Let us grant that to be the case, still that advantage would continue in Fife, supposing an eight hours day were established, and the result would be to place the west at a disadvantage as compared with Fife?—I do not think so.

3919. Why not?—It would create a steadiness and energy among the men there.

3920. How long would that take to bring about?—Well, it would not commence at once, I suppose, but it would take less time than 20 years, I am sure.

3921. But is it not clear that the establishment of an eight hours day if it destroyed the balance of advantage and disadvantage between one district and another would create at first, at all events, a very great dislocation of trade?—I cannot see how that could arise. I think that is a danger that is a little visionary.

3922. I will leave that point. There is one other point I should like to ask you a question about. You desire to establish an eight hours day by means of legislation partly because of the opposition of the employers to an eight hours day, and partly because of the apathy of men in certain districts which you think prevents them from obtaining it. Do you not think that there are other trades in which it would be desirable that the men should not work more than eight hours?—I think so. I am quite frank to admit that.

3923. And would you say that in those cases also Parliament ought to interfere?—My opinion on that is this. In all the trades where it has been shown by experience and where there is a desire on the part of the men that an eight hours day should and can be worked, my opinion is that Parliament should interfere and settle the number of hours for those trades. That is my view.

3924. Now supposing the effect of an eight hours day was to raise the price of coal (which it might readily be, I suppose you will grant), who would be the losers, who would be the sufferers from that rise in the price of coal?—As a result from the eight hours' day?

3925. Yes?—I expect that those who consumed the coal must pay the price, and therefore the loss would be the loss of those who consumed the coal if there is a loss in it.

3926. And the gainers would be the trade in question; in this case the mining trade. If an eight hours day for miners was established the mining trade would gain at the expense of the community generally, or rather at the expense of the consumers of coal?—Well, that is clearly hypothetical.

3927. But I ask your opinion. I am not making the statement, I am asking whether that is your view?—It is not my view. I have always found that when the price of coal was high there was a gain all round. I do not know where the money came from, but it did not come out of the pockets of the general public as a whole, because the general prosperity of the country was such that prices of other things went up as well, and recouped the buyer of coal.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

3928. In that case the high price of coal is a sign, not the cause, of prosperity?—It always has been.

3929. But if this high price of coal was artificially produced by the action of Parliament quite apart from the general prosperity of the country you could hardly draw such an inference, could you?—Well, I think the danger is very infinitesimal of raising the price of coal through the eight hours day.

Chairman.

3930. Why if the high price of coal was not merely a sign of but was contributing to the general prosperity, was it not permanently maintained?—We have always seen those fluctuations that it is sometimes difficult to explain. I am not prepared off hand to explain them.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

3931. I will only ask you this last question. Suppose the effect of a uniform eight hours' day for miners was to obtain a gain for this particular trade at the expense of the community, do you think Parliament would be justified in interfering on behalf of any one trade in that way?—If it is for the safety and for the health of those that are employed in that particular trade, I say certainly.

3932. Then the grounds upon which you really base this demand for legislative interference are the grounds of the health and safety of the miners?—Certainly.

3933. And you think that mining is, in respect of danger and unhealthiness, different from all other trades in the country?—It is not different from all others; there may be some trades as dangerous and as unhealthy, but whenever that exists I consider there should be a limit of the working hours to the lowest possible.

3934. But surely that is to some extent a question of degree. Before you can differentiate one trade from another in respect to the way in which it is treated by Parliament you have to show or ought to be able to show that that trade

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

differs very markedly from other trades with which no such interference is proposed?—I do not suppose that it would be necessary to show that in every case. If it was shown that economically the trade could stand to be reduced in hours apart from the considerations of health and safety altogether, then it might be quite legitimate on the part of a trade to ask Parliament to interfere.

3935. But I thought a minute ago you acknowledged to me that the only grounds upon which Parliament could be expected to treat one trade differently from another were the grounds of danger and unhealthiness?—That is in cases of urgency. I put it on the ground of urgency. Wherever you find a trade in such circumstances as I have described it is urgent that it should be dealt with. On the other hand another trade could come forward and ask Parliament to interfere to regulate their hours if they were of opinion that economically their trade could stand such interference.

3936. In short you yourself do not make this demand on the part of the miners alone, but you would be prepared to go further and you would take the eight hours bill for miners merely as an instalment?—Instalment of what?

3937. Instalment of a further advance in the same direction?—Well, I am inclined to the view. I may frankly confess that eight hours is quite sufficient for any one to work.

3938. Are you also inclined to the view that Parliament should be asked to establish an eight hours day for other trades than mining?—If those trades want it.

Mr. *Tait.*

3939. Besides danger and unhealthiness of course there is the consideration that the work of mining is labourous?—Certainly.

3940. You consider it very laborious work besides being dangerous and unhealthy?—Certainly.

3941. That is one of the grounds upon which you say that the miner should not work any longer than eight hours?—Certainly: he is not able to work much longer.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 11.30.

Chairman—continued.

or the check-weighman. It may be argued that we have the law on our side, that we can refer to a court of law, in order to put that matter right. I do not know whether you will permit me to say so, but if you do, so far as our district is concerned, we might as well go to the employers to redress our grievance as go to the stipendiary that we have. Therefore, we have no courage at all to go before that magistrate, because every case is given against us, unless it is—I might say—95 per cent. in our favour. Then there are other stoppages to which we object. Certainly we are not here to justify men for losing time which they are not justified in doing, but we believe that deductions by fines have been made many times when they should not have been made by the fact that men have gone to see their relations here and there, and when they return they are threatened with a fine. The men say, no, I am not willing to take it, but they say you will either have to take the 10*s.* or a pound fine, or go before the magistrate. Then the men come to the conclusion we had better not go before that magistrate, or else we will have to pay more than even what they fine us, and therefore they submit to the fine. Then we come to the hours of labour. The ordinary or standard hours of labour in my district are 54 hours per week.

3952. Are you speaking of underground work?—Yes. We had been under the impression that we were working 54 hours from bank to bank, but according to the construction which has been made lately of "from bank to bank," we must admit that we are not. It is nine hours per day, or 54 hours per week of operation. The collieries are drawing coal for the nine hours or 54 hours per week.

3953. Before you pass away from this "hours" question perhaps you will give us a little more exact information upon the subject; what are the hours of the hewers from bank to bank?—The hewers would be from bank to bank something like 9½ hours to 10 hours.

3954. From bank to bank?—Yes. Well, it is not very easy to say, because as the law is constructed at present——

3955. What I am speaking of is the practic — what is the practice—it must be easy to say at what hour they go down?—It is not easy to say because some of them have a practice there which they have not in other parts of the country—the hewer there cuts the coal.

3956. I mean to say there must be certain hours at which the hewers of a particular shift are lowered into the pit, and certain appointed hours for their being drawn out?—Well, they are permitted to be in the pit, they could be in the pit, say, for 60 hours per week; they could be, I do not say that they are; because the law does not prevent any man being 16 hours a day in the pit.

3957. What, as a matter of fact, are the hours at which the hewers are lowered down the shaft, and at what hours are they drawn out—in the first place tell us, are there two shifts of hewers?—No.

Chairman—continued.

3958. One shift?—Yes.

3959. At what hour does that shift begin to go down in the morning?—They commence to go down in the morning, say, on Monday at something like half-past 6, and they are all up afterwards at something like 3 o'clock.

3960. That would be 8½ hours, I think?—That would be 8½ hours.

3961. 8½ hours, not 9½ hours?—No, but we are supposed to draw coal in the pit, say——

3962. I think we had better first get the hours of particular important classes of workmen. Now you say the hewers begin to descend the shaft at half-past 6 in the morning?—Yes, and they continue to go down, say, till 7 o'clock.

3963. Now when do they begin to come up?—They commence to come up about 2 o'clock.

3964. About 2?—Yes.

Chairman.

You see the hours are shrinking very much from your original statement.

Sir *William Lewis.*

3965. Are you speaking of Monday still?—Yes.

3966. The Chairman did not, perhaps, understand you?—I am speaking of Monday to commence with.

Chairman.

3967. Very well, they begin to come up about 2?—Yes; and on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday they commence to go down at half-past 6, and then they commence to come up at 5, and Saturday the same regulation as on Monday. We might say that the district is almost unanimously in favour of reducing the hours of labour.

3968. Do the other classes employed underground keep pretty much the same hours as the hewers?—Pretty much the same.

3969. And the surface men; what hours do they keep?—Something similar. Then with reference to the remedy for that, as I have stated before, the men are almost unanimous in reducing the hours of labour to eight hours per day of operation, something similar to what we are working the nine hours a day now, or 54 hours a week; and they wish to have that by legislation. Our argument in favour of legisla— tion is that we believe the object of legislatio— at all times is to protect the weak against the strong, and our experience, in reference to con— tending with the capitalist, is that we are to— weak to maintain our position. There is a possibility that we could fight our battle ou— and get eight hours, say, during the good time— when the trade is very prosperous, such as w— have had lately; but as sure as we wou— succeed in the good times to get it, we wou— lose it in the bad times. Therefore we are favour of having eight hours labour by legis— la— tion. We are not in favour of eight hours fr— om bank to bank, because eight hours from bank to bank means in the great majority—alm— ost universally—that the actual working of coal

Chairman—continued.

hewers would not be more, on an average, than about 6½ hours. Therefore we take it that we cannot ask for that; we believe that the state of the country does not permit it at present. We believe there is a time when that will come into operation, but not just now. We might say that the hours of labour in our district have been much more than they are at present, and nothing has happened so effectually in my time at any rate to reduce the hours of labour to what they are at present as the passing of the Mines Act, that is to say, the prevention of boys working more than 54 hours per week, because it was rather impracticable to work the colliery all round without the boys under 16 years of age, and hence the Act had the effect of reducing the hours of labour all round.

3970. Perhaps before you pass from that you will tell us what were the hours of labour of the underground men before that reduction to which you have just alluded took place?—The underground men worked, previous to the passing of that Act, no doubt something like 60 hours per week, and those hours were reduced by the effect of the Act to 54. We wish, if it could be done, to have a clause in the Eight Hours Bill to prevent the double shift.

3971. You have not the double shift at present?—We have not the double shift at present, but we are afraid it would come in if something is not put in the Act to prevent it. We cannot, in my opinion, use too strong language to represent the feeling of the workmen against the double shift. We might put it, in fact, that they hate the idea of the double shift.

3972. Did they at one time work in the district on the double shift principle?—A few collieries.

3973. Did once do so, or still do so?—There is no colliery in my district at present that works the double shift, but they have tried it in three or four places.

3974. You said that you did not seek by legislation to have an eight hours from bank to bank, because you thought that would be impracticable for that trade?—Yes.

3975. What is it that you would seek?—An eight hours of winding coal, or eight hours of operation in the colliery. If we adopt the eight hours from bank to bank, we say this: that a man cannot go down the pit until 7 o'clock in the morning, and then in the collieries where it is necessary to have about three-quarters of an hour to let the men down, the raising of the coal would not commence before a quarter to 8, and the men all through the colliery practically would not commence before then.

3976. Would not something substantially more than eight hours from bank to bank approach nine hours from bank to bank?—Well, it may reach that point.

3977. Which is what you have on the average?—No, it is not.

3978. On the average?—No, it is not nine hours from bank to bank; at present we have nine hours of operation.

Mr. *Abraham.*

3979. Nine hours of drawing coal?—Nine hours of drawing coal which in fact we say we want to reduce by one hour and make it eight hours of winding coal or reduce the general hours that we have at present one hour per day. Then in reference to the safety of employment and the inspection of working places, we understand that the Act gives us the privilege at present to select men from among the men themselves to do the inspection in the interior of the working, and it is pretty well done while trade is good, but when the depression of trade comes the men are getting lax owing to the fact that the employers, I presume, are pushed by competition not to be so minute after safety, and when they neglect their real duty, the men dare not say what is necessary in every colliery. Hence the lack of this inspection which is given as a privilege to the working men themselves. We say that the working men should have the privilege of selecting what we might call an independent man, not being directly under the control of the colliery manager, so as to permit him, either as check-weighman or as miner's agent, to go down the pit and make an investigation. In reference to the work which is done or which ought to be done by the mines inspector under Her Majesty, we say that it is inadequate at present. The other day I attended a meeting which was attended by about 400 men, and in order to test this question, how often do the inspectors visit the interior of the colliery, I asked those present to uphold their hands whoever saw during their lifetime a mines inspector in the interior of the colliery, and only 18 out of the 400 did uphold their hands. I should say, according to what I understand, having been a practical miner from my childhood, I believe that that would represent something like the practice all through the district. Of course I do not know the work that is done altogether by the mines inspectors, but it is alleged at any rate that there is not a sufficient number of them at present. That is not my business to explain. In my opinion my business is to explain the effect of what is done at present.

Chairman.

3980. I understand you to say that advantage is taken at the collieries of your district of the provision for the appointment of workmen to inspect?—During the good times. Well, it is not taken advantage of in general even now, but when the depression of trade comes, as I have said before, I say that they do not take the advantage because they are too much afraid of the employers to say what is necessary to describe the real position of affairs. Hence my reason in asking the Legislature to make the law such as to permit independent men, such as miners' agents, to go and investigate the place. Then as to the dismissal of representative delegates. On the whole I must admit that the relations between capital and labour are very good in South Wales, but we know much of this dismissal of representative delegates. I

Chairman—continued.

happened to be one of them myself—many years ago, it is true—but the practice is carried on even now lately. We could give you instances of men after appearing before the managers and saying, in our opinion, what is truthful, and who, because they have done so against the will of the colliery owners, are dismissed either directly or indirectly. Then coming to the question of the refusal of unionists to work with non-unionsts we have nothing of that in our district. You can see, I believe, that we are not using coercion at all, not trying to coerce men into our association by the fact that we have 8,000 of the men in the association and 7,000 out. Then as to the use of the black list. I have not seen any black list myself, but in the few strikes that we have had of late years, some of the colliery managers have admitted to me that they have sent circulars themselves to some of the collieries to prevent the employment of men who are on strike at their own collieries, and we have had it that even the Colliery Owners' Association which we have in the district are guilty. Once that they have a colliery on strike they get the names of those on strike, and they issue a list of them through the collieries in order to prevent them getting employment elsewhere. As I said before, I have not seen a list of that kind, but when men have applied for employment in other collieries which are not on strike at the time, the colliery managers have admitted to the workmen that they dare not employ them, and that they knew they were on strike before they came there in order to seek employment. Then coming to the question of disputes, during the last 10 years we might say that we have not had many strikes in our district—we have had very few indeed in our district during the last 16 years, going on for 17. I am very glad to admit here and state that the relations between capital and labour in South Wales are ever so much better since we have established the sliding-scale system. But unfortunately we are not without any strikes at all, and if we could get some means to get rid of them altogether, we should only be too happy. As I said before, there is a system of sliding scale adopted in my district being a district among others which is composing the South Wales coalfield, and it works better than the old system, but it does not work satisfactorily. There is a defect in the sliding-scale system. There is a joint committee of both sides to carry out the agreement which is in existence, to carry out this sliding scale, but in order to make this committee more practical and more satisfactory we believe that it is essential to get an umpire between us when we fail to agree, because the men might allege many times that the colliery owners are guilty of making a breach in the agreement by their actions, and when the case comes before the sliding-scale joint committee both sides may be conscientious, and they discuss the matter, but they might discuss there for a week and not come to any conclusion, although both sides may believe conscientiously that they are right. The remedy for that, in my opinion, would be to have an umpire in between them in order to decide the dispute. These disputes, I can assure you, do create a great amount of dissatisfaction and disaffection towards the good principle of the sliding scale; and if there is anything more than another which is the cause of the disaffection which exists towards the principle of the sliding scale in our district, it is the want of an umpire. We have no hesitation in stating that we have been the sufferers many times when cases have been brought before the Sliding Scale Committee. We discuss the matter, and matters are dilly dallied and knocked from one corner to another, as it were, and delayed so much, and at the end of it they are told that we cannot agree; and if we cannot agree, that is as good as to say, Take it back to the colliery and fight it out. Well, we are not naturally fighters; we do not believe in fighting if we can help it; we would rather get an umpire between the two parties and prevent strikes altogether.

3981. I understand that that which you have been describing has reference not to the difference of opinion that may arise between the associated masters and the associated men, who neither of them are seeking to make a new sliding scale agreement, but that you are speaking of differences that have arisen under the operation of a sliding scale agreement?—Exactly so; and another thing, we have a grievance because the scale is not satisfactory. All we say is that we thought it was the best thing to be done under the circumstances. But to say that the present sliding scale is satisfactory is not correct, and the employers have given notice lately to terminate the sliding scale at the end of this year, and as I understand the reason is that we allege that we should have been paid so much for the small coal that is produced which is on an average something like 20 or 2[illegible] per cent., for which we get nothing. We allege that we ought to be paid. Then the employers say "No," and owing to the differences the employers have given notice, as I understand. But whatever may be the differences upon this point we are willing to refer this dispute to an umpire and let the umpire decide who is right and who is wrong. But the employers, as I understand the constitution and rules of their association say "No," no umpire shall decide between us and our workmen."

3982. On the other hand, that which you have within the last moment or two dwelt upon is a question of varying the conditions of the existing scale?—Oh, yes.

3983. The employers, as I understand you have given notice to terminate the existing sliding scale at the end of the year?—Yes.

3984. With a view, I presume, to its being modified in their interest?—It may be so.

3985. Is that to be understood?—It may be so.

3986. It would be interesting to know whether in giving such notice it has either been notified or well known that it is with a view to abandoning the sliding scale system or with a view to modify

Chairman—continued.

it?—The notice does not specify what is their object.

3987. And you cannot say?—We cannot say. We as workmen say this, "Whatever may be the "dispute, we are willing to refer the dispute to "an umpire."

3988. You are speaking of your district?—Exactly.

3989. You say that the sliding-scale system is looked upon with favour?—Yes.

3990. That you would desire a continuance of the sliding-scale system?—Yes.

3991. And that you advocate the appointment of an umpire, either with a view to settle differences that may arise between the parties on negotiating a sliding scale, or in the carrying of it out?—Exactly so. I have no better suggestion in order to avoid strikes than to establish a sliding scale or conciliation, and getting umpires between the parties in case of disputes.

3992. You say there is a joint committee?—Yes.

3993. Has it a chairman when it meets?—Yes.

3994. One of the members constituting the committee?—Yes.

3995. Usually an employer?—Yes, always.

3996. Has he a casting vote?—We are not doing business by voting. Both parties must agree in all cases.

3997-8. It is a conciliatory body?—Yes.

3999. It is not a voting body at all?—It is not a voting body.

4000. How long is it since you had any important strike in that district?—We had an important strike, which affected something like 2,000 men, at the commencement of this year.

4001. That of course was local, seeing the number you mention?—Yes, exactly.

4002. Have you had any general strike within the past 10 years?—Not for the last, nearly 17 years.

4003. Such strikes as have taken place have been local?—Yes.

4004. Has the tendency lately been to an increased number or a diminished number of strikes?—Increasing lately. I would not say increasing in my district. I thought you asked the question in reference to South Wales generally. I do not believe I can say they have increased in my district.

4005. Have they turned chiefly upon interpretations of sliding scale obligations?—Yes, the last one.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

4006. Your district forms part of the South Wales mining district, does it not?—Exactly.

4007. Does your Union extend over the whole of that district?—Oh, yes; but of course they are not all in the Association, as I said before. There are only about 8,000 of them.

4008. But I think in the course of your examination you have sometimes spoken of your district as distinct from the South Wales district generally?—It is a part of the South Wales district.

4009. I wished to know whether your Union extended over the whole of the mining district, or was confined to a part of it?—No; it extends over the whole of these two valleys.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

4010. But not over the whole of South Wales?—No.

4011. It is not the only miners' union in South Wales?—No.

4012. Do the views of your Union agree generally with the views of the other unions in South Wales?—With the exception of this question of eight hours I think we do agree, but we differ upon that point. We say eight hours of operation, and to get that by legislation, but the others, as I understand them, go in for eight hours from bank to bank, which means a vast difference.

4013. You speak of the unskilled labour that is employed in the Aberdare and Merthyr Valleys?—Yes.

4014. You say the employment of unskilled labour not only produces a detrimental effect by flooding the labour market, but also by causing injury to the workings?—Certainly.

4015. And that cases have occurred where the owners have been obliged to send experienced men to repair the damage that has been done at a large expenditure?—Exactly.

4016. I suppose the masters would not employ those inexperienced labourers, unless they thought it would pay them to do so?—No doubt; but they make many mistakes.

4017. Do those mistakes lead to loss to anybody else besides the employers?—Yes, it puts the employers in a position that they cannot pay so much to those who are capable of doing the work, because they are giving money away in cases in which they should not, and therefore they have not got so much money to pay the skilled labour.

4018. But, on the whole, they must take into consideration such injury to the workings as occurs through the employment of these unskilled labourers; yet they continue to employ them?—They do.

4019. And therefore, I presume, they find the employment profitable?—They may be under the impression that it is profitable.

4020. You think they make a mistake in that?—Oh, decidedly.

4021. With regard to the present law that forbids the employment of an inexperienced person alone, you say that that has been evaded by the managers sending in two inexperienced persons?—Yes, in many cases.

4022. Have you ever endeavoured to ascertain whether the law permits that?—No; we have been governed by the opinion of the inspectors of mines, and they have really convinced us that it is the case. The wording of the Act is "alone," as I have said. It says "a person shall not work alone." It does not say "persons." Therefore they put two together, and so evade the responsibility.

4023. Has the Government inspector informed you that in his opinion that was the meaning and intention of the Act?—Oh, yes.

4024. Now with regard to the hours of labour. On Mondays and Saturdays the hours

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

of the hewers begin at 6.30?—They commence to go down at 6.30. But, you see, the last of them would not be down till 7 o'clock—may be in many cases a little after 7.

4025. They begin to come up at 2?—Yes.

4026. When does the last man come up?—In some cases some of them might stay there till 4, because as I intended to say, we have a practice in Wales which does not obtain in other parts of the country. The coal hewer cuts his coal, and fills it, setting up pit wood to uphold the roof, and then in order to get the trams in after them, when the seams are too thin, they either cut the roof or the bottom; therefore they do this work invariably after the general hours, and so they are coming out, some of them, it may be, at 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock.

4027. Do they remain till 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock at their own option?—Exactly. They are not compelled.

4028. The Union does not endeavour to prevent men staying one or two hours longer in the mine than the normal time?—We persuade them not to do so as much as we can.

4029. But you do not apply any compulsion? No.

4030. I have calculated the hours out, and I find that taking Monday and Saturday at $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and the other four days in the week at $10\frac{1}{2}$, you get a total of 57 hours?—Yes, that is to say they are down the pit that time.

4031. That is a total of 57 hours from bank to bank?—Yes.

4032. In addition to that a certain number of them will remain on Mondays and Saturdays after 2 o'clock?—Yes. I do not say they would stay on Saturdays.

4033. On Mondays they would stay sometimes as much as two hours after 2 o'clock?—Yes.

4034. Now you say that the men are almost unanimous in their wish to reduce the hours of labour to eight, and by legislation?—Yes.

4035. Does eight hours a day by legislation mean 48 hours a week, or does it mean eight hours in every 24?—Eight hours in every 24.

4036. So that this system of working a different number of hours on the different days in the week is one you object to?—We do not like it; we propose to abolish it.

4037. Have you ever endeavoured to induce the masters to alter it?—Yes, we had a long discussion. We tried to make a point of it to reduce the hours of labour to 48 hours per week when we made the last agreement in the sliding scale business; but the colliery owners would not have it.

4038. It is a somewhat unusual practice, is it not, to work a different number of hours on the different days of the week?—It is the practice in our district at any rate.

4039. Do you know why it was adopted or why it is now maintained?—No. When this system of hours was established I was not with them in the conferences which were held at that time. Therefore I cannot say what the arguments were that were adopted at that time.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

4040. The men, however, dislike that unequal division of their work?—Yes.

4041. And would endeavour to alter it if they could?—Yes.

4042. They have endeavoured to alter it?—They would alter it, as I have said, to eight hours per day.

4043. You say that they desire this change by legislation, because they would be too weak to maintain their position—that although they might gain the eight hours in good times, they would be too weak to maintain that position in bad times?—Yes.

4044. And you lay down the general principle that it is the duty of Parliament to protect the weak?—Yes.

4045. And that therefore it should interfere on behalf of the miners in this case?—Exactly.

4046. Now, if in good times the miners are able to compel the employers to accept an eight hours day, who is the weaker party during the good times, the miners or the employers?—We might admit that we get an advantage when the market is rising, as compared to our position in bad times, but I do not admit for a moment that we are stronger than they, even in the good times. We are stronger in the good times than we are in the bad times.

4047. You appear to be stronger than the employers if you can compel them to accept shorter hours than they approve of?—We cannot compel them in good times, or else we should have done it now.

4048. Do you think you would not have been able to?—It is questionable. In fact we have failed. We have tried this matter in discussion with the employers when establishing the last sliding scale and they would not have it, and I do not say what would have been the result if we had struck. We are peaceable people, we do not like strikes.

4049. It has often happened throughout the country that the Miners' Union has compelled the employers to grant concessions?—Yes.

4050. Would you apply your principle that it is the duty of Parliament to protect the weak in that case, and say that in that case it is the duty of Parliament to protect the owners against the men?—Oh, certainly. If the men turn tyrants on the employers, then I would say protect the employers.

4051. Then it comes to this, does it not, that in all disputes between employers and men, Parliament is to interfere and regulate the business?—I would not go so far as that, but, in reference to the hours of labour, I say that Parliament should intervene.

4052. Only with regard to the hours of labour?—Only with regard to the hours of labour. I would not go so far as to say that Parliament should interfere in the wages question.

4053. But if Parliament is to interfere on the ground that it is the duty of Parliament to protect the weak against the strong, on what grounds should they not interfere with wages as well as hours?—I should not like to see Parliament interfere in the question of wages.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

because I believe that might bring about the result of destroying competition altogether, and hence it would be detrimental to this country, in my opinion.

4054. You think if Parliament were to interfere with wages, it might have the effect of dislocating trade?—Yes.

4055. Do not you think it is possible that trade might be dislocated by an interference with the hours?—No.

4056. On what ground do you make that distinction?—Because, as I understand, our Continental friends go in for eight hours as well as ourselves, and if they go in for eight hours we can easily compete with them in any part of the world.

4057. In that case you would not be an advocate of an eight hours' legislative day in this country unless there were a simultaneous legislative eight hours' day in foreign countries?—Exactly.

4058. But there is not a legislative eight hours' day in foreign countries at the present time?—There are not laws to that effect already, but they are going in for it.

4059. Then I understand from you, that, although you are desirous of seeing this change, you would not wish to see it adopted unless there were a simultaneous change of like character in foreign countries?—I believe if this country were to go in for it, other countries would follow.

4060. Do you think that they would choose the very moment when we had weakened our power of competition for following our example?—I do not believe the higher classes would, but I believe the working classes throughout England, France, Germany, and Belgium are going in favour of the eight hours by legislation.

4061. Yes; so far as can be judged by the votes they have given, they certainly desire it?—They not only desire it, but they are going to agitate for it, and going to force the hands of the Legislature to do so.

4062. I would like a distinct answer to this question. Would you, and those whom you represent, be in favour of introducing this change into England before it is introduced into foreign countries?—Yes, in order to be an example to others, and I believe that others would follow.

4063. Suppose they did not follow?—I believe it would be injurious to us afterwards if they did not follow.

4064. In other words, if they did not follow we should have to return to the present system?—It may be.

4065. Now I observe that your measure of what the Legislature ought to do seems to be simply the requirements of your own particular district?—Yes.

4066. You do not go in for what the miners in general advocate—an eight hours' day from bank to bank?—No.

4067. You say that would not do in your district, and, therefore, looking to the wants of your district you propose that Parliament should pass a Bill providing for an eight hours' *working* day for the whole of the country?—Yes.

4068. In other words you measure what is desirable for the country by what is desirable for yourselves?—If you put it to me I believe it is their duty to go in for the same as us, but you must leave them to judge for themselves, it is true.

4069. You think Parliament ought to determine the number of hours according to the needs of the Merthyr and Aberdare Valleys?—And that would be applicable to the other districts, in my opinion.

4070. The other districts do not think so?—That may be possible.

4071. You go so far as to desire the introduction into the Coal Mines Act of a clause forbidding the double shift system?—Yes.

4072. Are you aware that the double shift system is very largely used in certain districts in England,—in the Durham and Northumberland districts almost universally?—Yes.

4073. Are you aware that the miners in that district consider the advantages they enjoy depend upon that system?—I have never heard the working men admitting, throughout the country, that the double shift system is advantageous to them. All they say is, "We have it "at present, and if you do away with it it will "throw thousands out of employment." It does not follow that if the double-shift system was done away with, and one shift adopted, that they would not be able to get the work done with one shift. I have not heard even an individual miner in this country admit that the double-shift system is advantageous to them.

4074. Will you take it from me that it has been given in evidence by the representatives of Durham and Northumberland that they do consider it advantageous to them?—I will take it from you.

4075. Under those circumstances would you, because in your district you dislike the double-shift system, ask that Parliament should introduce a clause into the Coal Mines Regulation Act forbidding that system all over the country?—What I say is, leave the English people to adopt the best thing for themselves, and let us have Home Rule for Wales.

Mr. *Trow.*

4076. With regard to this eight hours, you would have the men to work eight hours at the face instead of eight hours from bank to bank?—No. My scheme does not mean eight hours in the face. When I said eight hours of operation I meant for them to be down in the pit for eight hours. It would follow that the actual work on the face would not be much more, if anything on the average, than seven hours.

4077. But are you aware that every other witness from the mine who has come here has advocated eight hours from bank to bank?—No, I do not know that, but I assume it is the case. I have not been here to listen to them.

4078. With regard to the double shift are you aware that the League representative declared yesterday that instead of the double

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

shift they wanted a treble shift to meet the difficulty—that is, three shifts of six hours instead of two of eight?—I understood Mr. Jaques to say yesterday, when he brought the scheme before this Committee, that if he had his own way he would abolish the double shift altogether.

4079. I beg your pardon; he wanted to substitute a treble shift?—Yes, it is true, in order to meet the circumstances; but he said if he had his own way he would abolish the double shift altogether.

4080. Did not you hear him admit that Northumberland could not do without the double shift?—I never heard him.

4081. He confessed yesterday they could not carry on without?—I did not take notice of him.

4082. You say you do not want an eight hours' shift enforced upon the coalowners of this country unless it is adopted on the Continent?—I did not say that. What I said was this: that I should like to see this country adopt it with a view of being a good example to other countries, and that I believed that they would follow, and that if they did not follow it might be true that we should have to return to the old mode by the force of competition.

4083. I understood you, in reply to Mr. Baltour, to say that you would not desire it enforced here unless it was enforced on the Continent?—But I qualified that afterwards.

4084. Will you tell me what hours they work on the Continent now in mines?—I am not positive. I know they are working more than eight. They are working as much as 10 or 11 in Belgium.

4085. No more than that anywhere?—No, not to my knowledge.

4086. Is it not strange they do not follow the men in this country and come down to the same level, and is there any probability that they would come to the eight, seeing that they do not come down to the hours that we are working?—We have met them in congresses at any rate, and they seem to be more zealous upon the Continent than even we are.

4087. Are you aware it has been their custom always to appeal to Parliament to protect them against the employers?—Not in Belgium! That is the case in Germany and France, I think.

4088. Would you allow any man, under any circumstances, to work more than eight hours if he desired it?—No.

4089. You would have a general eight hours' Bill?—I am referring to the underground mine. I would have a general eight hours' Bill for miners.

4090. If Parliament steps in and says how many hours you shall give in return for the wages you receive, and the employers say, "Well, we cannot afford to pay the wages," will they have the right to come to Parliament and ask Parliament to fix the rate of wages you should receive?—They would have the right to ask them, may be, but I would not be in favour of Parliament interfering.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

4091. But are you to have any voice in it?—Certainly, as long as I am a citizen.

4092. The employers object to Parliamentary interference; you are asking for it; if Parliament grants your request, could it object on principle to grant the employers' request, if they put it a little further in wages?—It is very improbable that the employers will ever come to Parliament to ask Parliament to interfere with the wages question, because, in my opinion, they do ever so much better under the present system.

4093. But you want to alter the system?—I do not want to alter the system in reference to the wages question. I am only advocating the interference of Parliament so far as the hours are concerned.

4094. Are the wages the same in the various districts now?—No.

4095. Then if you are going to make all districts, whatever disadvantages they may labour under, adopt the Eight Hours Bill, who is going to settle the wages? Must not you have a universal rate of wages as well as a universal rate of hours?—No; it may be practicable for the Legislature to interfere in the hours question, but not practicable to interfere in the wages question.

4096. Now, with regard to the sliding scale: you are in favour of a sliding scale?—Yes.

4097. And you are in favour of conciliation and arbitration?—Yes.

4098. And you think, if it was possible to form a conciliation board, with an umpire mutually selected, that all the difficulties with regard to the carrying out of the conditions of your scale would cease to exist?—I would not say all the difficulties, but a great many of the difficulties that we have at present.

4099. That is to say, you would be prepared to submit it to an umpire and accept his decision, whether for or against?—Yes.

Mr. *Abraham.*

4100. You say in your district it is the custom to draw coals for nine hours?—Exactly.

4101. Does the colliery stop any time during the nine hours?—In some cases they do. Do you mean for food?

4102. Yes?—They do in some cases something like 20 minutes, but in the majority they do not.

4103. Is there any specific time when men are put down before the time of commencing to draw coal?—Oh, yes. The time is fixed, and if the men are not down at that time they cannot go down at all—that is, in the pits.

4104. Is there any specific time for them to commence going down? I know there is a time beyond which they cannot go down?—Oh, well, it is specified in this way—that they cannot go to their workings, at any rate, before the fireman will retire and give a report of the inspection that he makes. I do not know of any specific time they cannot go down. They are not supposed, at any rate, to go into the workings before the firemen return.

Sir *William Lewis.*

4130 Do you consider that the number of hours a man works has anything to do with the amount of earnings he should obtain?—Yes; of course a man cannot produce as much in seven hours as he could in nine.

4131. And do you intend that the workmen shall earn the same money, assuming that your wish is gratified, after the hours are reduced to eight as they do now?—So far as the piece-workers are concerned they would not do it, because the less they could produce the less money would they receive. But it might affect the day wagemen. But, in my opinion, the reduction of hours by one hour would not have much effect upon the produce, and therefore that would do away to a great extent with the argument about reducing even the day wagemen. I believe that many reforms could be effected in the colliery, and many things done differently to what occurs in practice at the present time in order that the colliery might be worked more regularly than it is at present. Further than that, I believe that if we were to have the Legislature to interfere, those who lose time now would work more regularly. Hence the production would be more regular than it is at present. I have no need to tell some of the members of this Commission unfortunately that we have men losing time who are in the habit of drinking, and when they do lose time they say, "We lose a day or two now, " and we can draw it back before the end of " the fortnight by working overtime," making an extra stretch. But once you interfere with their privilege in that way they would come to the conclusion, "We must go to work every " day or have no chance to draw it back again." Hence the effect of reducing the hours of labour, in my opinion, would not be great upon the production.

4132. Would you make it obligatory to work regularly, and to work every day in the week?—I do not say that I would go so far as that. There is another thing. As I have said, it would not be so necessary, because naturally they would work more regularly themselves.

4133. Then the employers are to be bound on the one hand, and the men are to be free on the other—is that it?—Yes.

4134. Now upon that question of irregular work, perhaps you can tell us something more than you have already said as to the proportion of men that attend work the first three days of the week in collieries in South Wales at the present time?—Do you mean every week?

4135. Give me your own recollection?—I am sorry to say that there are many of them out during "Mr. Abraham's week," what w call 'Mabon's week."

4136. During any other weeks?—Well, yes, they are in the habit of losing time other weeks, but this week is worse than the others.

4137. Apart from going to see their relations, as you told the Chairman they were in the habit of doing?—Yes.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

4138. So that it is not for going to see their relations that they are always fined 10*s.*?—Not altogether.

4139. Occasionally it arises from circumstances which you have not yet described?—Oh, yes. I do not come here to allege that our men are perfect.

4140. Then would you tell us something about the wages per day that some colliers earn at the present time?—The coal hewers are earning in my district something like 7*s.* 3*d.* or 7*s.* 2*d.*, something like that.

4141. On an average?—On an average.

4142. Some of them as much as 10*s.* and 11*s.* when they work?—Some of them may go so far as 10*s.*, and others are as low as 4*s.*

4143. Arising from irregular work?—Oh no.

4144. Have you any information that you could give to the Commission on the point?—Yes, there are several causes of the difference in wages. One man may be much stronger physically than another, and much more skilled than another, and I have seen differences in the circumstances in regard to working places, a difference which would affect their wages, given the same amount of labour to the extent of 2*s.* a day even.

4145. Are you referring now to the difference in the place, or the difference between the ability or strength to perform work as between one man and another?—I was referring to the difference between one place and another. I have seen a difference of 2*s.* in the circumstances of the place itself, and then there is also of course a difference between man and man in regard to physical strength, and skill and ability.

4146. At the present time the difference between man and man may be made up by the weaker working longer hours than the stronger ones; but you are seeking to prevent the man having an opportunity of making up in time what he may be wanting in strength, as compared with his neighbouring workmen?—I presume if he is too weak to keep up with a man as long as he is with him, he will be too weak to stay in after him.

4147. Then going back to your answer as to the eight hours, you will not, in arranging the hours of a collier in the future, expect that he should earn the same money that he does at present?—Certainly he would not, because he will be working in each case by piece-work, and if he produces a less amount the less will be the pay.

4148. But is it possible that the men may ask a little more tonnage in order to make it up, or a little more yardage?—It is possible, but I do not expect he will get it, according to my experience.

4149. You used the expression "collier"; will you be kind enough to tell me what class of men you mean?—Coal cutters or hewers.

4150. Only?—Yes.

4151. Have you taken steps to inquire carefully whether the figure you gave to the Chairman as to there being 25 per cent. unskilled colliers in your district is a correct one or not?—

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

No, I have not taken any special measures to ascertain—only my general knowledge.

4152. So that you would not be surprised if it was very much less than that?—Well, I will take it from you if it is so, but I presume yet at any rate that I am bound to be right.

4153. Having regard to your previous answer, as to the men who are engaged on other operations not embraced in the getting of coal?—If I had thought that you had referred to that subject of unskilled labour of course I should have involved more than colliers alone because the unskilled labour is in connexion with the timbering, cutting—what we might call "pookings," &c.—night workmen.

4154. Would you not say it was much more applicable to labour of that description than to coal getters?—No, I believe they are pretty well the same.

4155. Going back to the question of wages and fines, I do not think you told the Chairman anything as to what the colliers had by way of privileges?—What do you mean by privileges?

4156. Take the price you pay for your house coal?—That question was not asked. We do not get our house and coal for nothing.

4157. I have not said house and coal. I said house coal?—The house coal is not got for nothing.

4158. I did not say for nothing. What is the price that you pay?—It is cheaper than what is is sold to the public as a rule, but some of the colliers in my district pay something similar even to what is paid by the general public.

4159. Will you please to tell us what colliers in your district pay for their house coal?—They pay at Dowlais; they pay at Cyfartha, Plymouth, Powell Duffryn, Gadlys and others.

4160. How much?—Do you want me to describe what it is in each place?

4161. Yes?—That I could not say, but I presume that I should put down the average at something like 7*s.* a ton delivered.

4162. 7*s.* per ton?—Yes.

4163. What would be the price for other workmen at the same time for their coal?—Do you mean workmen connected with the colliery?

4164. With the same works?—The same company you mean?

4165. Yes?—Well they are paying more.

4166. How much more?—Their average would be, it may be, 9*s.* per ton more.

4167. And how much would the public pay for the same coal at the same time?—Something like 14*s.*

4168. Then you have not taken that advantage into account in giving us the wages that are now enjoyed by the colliers. Will you carry your mind back and tell the Committee whether the wages were ever higher in the steam-coal collieries than they are at present?—Yes, they were in 1873.

4169. Are you quite sure of that?—I am positive of it.

4170. Will you please to give us some data for that?—If you take the wages of the hauliers, for instance, in order to test the matter, the wages of the hauliers at that time was 5*s.* 3*d.* a day, and they are at present only 3*s.* plus 57½ per cent.—and I presume 5*s.* 3*d.* a day is more than 3*s.* plus 57½ per cent.

4171. Well, going on to other descriptions—take the colliers for the getting of the coal. The collier performs by far the largest proportion of the labour in connexion with the colliery, and I ask you to consider whether your answer was correct when you said that in 1873 the steam coal collier was paid better wages or better prices than at the present time?—Yes. The principle that I have laid down with reference to the haulier will apply to every other description, because they have been reduced and advanced *pro rata* in both cases—therefore it applies to every other description.

4172. If that is your answer I must accept it?—And I presume that the difference is some thing like 15 per cent.

4173. Could you tell the Committee what number of days per month are now being worked in the collieries?—Of four weeks you mean?

4174. Yes?—Well, they are working, unless we get depression of trade, which has been the case lately, 23 days.

4175. Apart from the depression of trade, how many days a month are the collieries stopped by reason of the men being absent from work?—One day.

4176. Only?—Only; excepting, of course, the colliers are not producing the same amount of coal the days after. As I have said before at this holiday that we have the collieries do not produce so much coal for the following two or three days, in fact, owing to the fact that the men will lose time.

4177. Hundreds of men out from one pit for several days after this Mabon's Monday?—Well, a great percentage of them at any rate.

4178. With reference to the eight hours, I did not quite understand an answer you gave to Mr. Balfour, whether you advocated enforcing the eight hours against the wishes of any set of men or against any district?—I do not wish to enforce it against the wish of anybody, because, so far as my district is concerned they are almost unanimous.

4179. But assuming your district were unanimous and there was a district immediately adjoining it that were not, would you still desire the Government to enforce it upon that district where they do not want it?—I have been willing to be governed by the majority in any trade.

4180. The majority in the kingdom or the majority in a district?—Well the majority, say, in South Wales.

4181. So that, assuming that the Aberdare and the Rhondda Valley did not wish to have eight hours enforced upon them, and the Merthyr and Rhymney Valleys did, you would still enforce it upon the Aberdare and Rhondda?—Yes.

4182. Against their will?—Yes, if they were in a minority.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

4183. Then I should like you to enlarge, if you please upon your objections to the double shift which you desire shall be forbidden by Act of Parliament. Why should you be so anxious to have it forbidden when it is not now enforced upon you?—We are under a strong impression that if an eight hours' Bill from bank to bank is passed it will be the means of enforcing it.

4184. You think it will naturally follow that there should be the double shift?—Yes.

4185. And you want to prevent that?—Yes.

4186. What remedy would you suggest to meet your complaint as to the number of agricultural labourers that are allowed to go into the collieries?—I have said the remedy, I do not say that they should not be employed in the colliery at all, but I would not give a place for a man to work as a collier unless he had been under the supervision of a practical miner at least two years; in fact, if I had my way of proposing legislation, I would say five years.

4187. So that a man would not be regarded as a practical miner until he had been under the tuition of another practical miner for five years?—For five years.

4188. Would you apply that to every other description of labour underground?—No; I would apply it to timbermen and rippers and colliers.

4189. What other description of labour is there underground besides that and the hauliers and stowers—is it not practically applying it to the whole?—Except——

4190. Except the hauliers and stowers?—No, I would not apply it to what we term common labourers and hauliers.

4191. I do not wish to suggest anything that you said against the employers, but I believe you did suggest that the employers connived at getting men into the mine who were incompetent?—I believe they do.

4192. You deliberately say that with respect to your district?—Yes, my district. I do not say that they are guilty all together, but a few of them.

4193. And the few rarely?—Yes.

4194. Now assuming that to be so, is not that very exceptional, and does it not arise from the great development of collieries in that district during the last few years, and the difficulty of getting boys to take to the work of colliers, and so supply the demand for underground labour?—I would not say that they would adopt unskilled labour before they would adopt the skilled, and of course it amounts to that; as you put it, that as long as they can get the demand they are anxious to fulfil the necessity. There is no doubt about that, but in my opinion they do do that, to their own detriment and to the colliers' as well.

4195. Then you assume that you are better capable of judging upon that than people who have devoted their lives to it; who have to pass examinations for certificates, and who have the responsibility of conducting the mines: you assume to be a better authority upon those matters than people who are obliged to have that experience?—Being that you put it in that way, I say that I do presume myself better than those who are guilty of that. I would not do it, and I blame them for doing it.

4196. From what class are check-weighers usually appointed?—From among the best of the workmen, as a rule.

4197. As a rule; and then what are the exceptions?—Well, there are exceptions, for them to adopt men who are not altogether practical miners on the account that they are coming in to work a few years in the colliery, and that they are better educated and better able to do that kind of work. It is not necessary, of course, so much to have a practical miner to weigh a ton of coal in the machine as it is to cut the coal.

4198. You have known smiths and various kinds of people taking to check-weighing?—No, I do not remember.

4199. Then I think you said in reply to the Chairman that the check-weigher should be the sole arbiter as to various matters in connexion with the mine?—No, what I said was that it should be done, according to the Act, between the check weighman and the weigher, which is not always the case at present.

4200. I took down the words, I may be wrong, that the check-weighman should be the sole arbiter?—No, I did not say that.

4201. Then you qualify it to that extent if I am right. Would you seriously suggest that it should go on the notes of the proceedings of this Committee that the stipendiary in our district is either incompetent or unwilling to deal with mining cases when they go before him?—I have no hesitation in stating before the world that I believe he is partial to employers.

4202. Going back to your suggested hours of work, as to which Mr. Balfour made out the difference I think between what is now being worked and what you would suggest to be, about an hour, is it?—Yes.

4203. So that you would be content with nine hours from bank to bank?—I think that would meet it.

4204. But you would not allow any men to remain longer in the mine if they so wished it?—No.

4205. You said I think, that as a rule men remained in on Mondays; first of all you said Saturdays and Mondays, but then you corrected yourself and said on Mondays, they remained longer in the evening or afternoon in order to make their place good?—That is the case.

4206. Would you say on further consideration that that is the practice?—Well, that is not generally the case.

4207. Well, I am asking is it the practice or is it exceptional?—It is exceptional; that is what I said before in fact.

4208. I think I must correct you, Mr. Morgan. I must appeal to the notes if you do so?—I did not say that that was general; some persons I said would do that.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

(*Chairman.*) By longer on Monday I understand, not longer than on the other days of the week, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, but longer than the standard hours.

(Sir *William Lewis.*) Longer than the standard hours; he was asked some questions as to the operations. We work two short days in the week—when we work at all on Mondays; that is Mondays and Saturdays, and Mr. Morgan, as I understood, said it was the usual practice for them to remain longer in than the particular hours which are stipulated for on Monday. If I misunderstood him I withdraw my question.

(*The Witness.*) You misunderstood me, I believe.

4209. Then would you tell the Committee in detail, if you have thought it out, your objections to the double shift?—My objection to the double shift is, in the first place, I believe and know it from experience, that it is unnatural for a man to work at night, and those that are working at night at present and so early in the morning, as they do under the double shift system, I believe it is a sacrifice of human beings. Further than that I do not believe that the collieries could be worked so safe as they are at present, under the present system of one shift. During the time the colliery is unworked the produce of gas is coming out and is diluted by the air, and so there is not so much of it when they are working the other shift afterwards, while if there was a continual shift or operation in the face of the workings it would produce, well, 40 per cent. more gas than is produced at present under the single shift.

4210. With respect to safety, do you suggest that the collieries that are worked in the North by double shift incur greater risk than our single-shift collieries?—So far as gas is concerned.

4211. You do?—Yes, because while the faces of the workings are idle, the gas is always oozing out, and is so sucked out by the air that is passing by, so reducing the produce of gas when they are in operation.

4212. How do you account then for the fact that there are fewer accidents in the North in double-shift collieries than there are in South Wales collieries?—Well, there is much better roof in the North of England than there is in Wales.

4213. Leave the roof out of the question: compare colliery with colliery without the roof?—So far as accidents are concerned?

4214. Yes?—I do not believe that their collieries are naturally so explosive, I mean so gaseous, as our collieries.

4215. Are you speaking now with a knowledge of it—a knowledge of the North I mean—I know you are well up in the collieries in the South?—I am only speaking of them according to the evidence that I have had; and I have made it a practice to interrogate every individual I met from the North upon this question. So far as I can understand the South Wales coal is much more gaseous than the coals in the North. That, in my opinion, is proved from the fact that our quality of coal is more gaseous in itself than that which is produced in the North.

4216. That is your impression. Does it not occur to you that it is an advantage to get the same quantity of coal from about half the area of colliery open; does not that reduce the risk of men exposed to danger at one time?—You would not, perhaps, if you were to adopt the double-shift system reduce the number of men working in the pit at the time.

4217. You tell me what I would do or what I would not, but I will ask you to suppose ——? But it is not the case where they are working double shift.

4218. I will ask you, if you please, to suppose that the colliery output is a thousand tons per day with a double shift, and you have practically a thousand colliers to get that?—Yes.

4219. Now, how many would you require with a single shift?—Oh, in that case of course the number of colliers at the pit would be reduced to one half.

4220. Quite so, as I put it to you; if you will allow me to interrupt you,—a very much less number of men—I should have said one half—exposed to the risk of accident at any one time?—Yes; but the question is this; according to our experience with colliery owners, even if they had their own way to introduce the double shift, they would not reduce the number of men at all in the pit at the time; the result would be that they would increase the number of men in the colliery to double what they are at present.

4221. If they did, in that case they would double the quantity?—Exactly.

4222. And therefore there would be a fewer number of colliers still exposed to risk of accidents. I ask you again whether the introduction of the double shift would not reduce the number of men exposed at any one time to the risk of accident in a colliery?—I say no. Supposing that an explosion took place in the colliery, I believe that the colliery would be filled then the same as it is now, and if a disaster took place it would sweep away the same number of men as it does now.

4223. Have you taken the trouble to inquire, before giving evidence upon the inspection of workings by workmen, that is to say, availing themselves of the powers they have under the Mines Regulation Act——?—I beg your pardon.

4224. Have you taken the trouble to inquire how often or in what number of collieries the men inspect the workings for themselves?—Well, they would take the advantage of that privilege in the majority of cases now during the good times, but, as I said before, when the depression of trade comes it is diminishing.

4225. Why?—Because, I do not know whether it is owing to competition, which is a pressure upon the employer, but they do not put men enough, say, to look after the air-ways, and keep the ventilation as good as it ought to be, and consequently there is an accumulation of gas, and the men know. You cannot get men to go, because if they say the

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

truth they are dismissed, either directly or indirectly.

4226. Are you speaking from any knowledge of men having been dismissed for reporting the condition of any workings. You are making a serious charge, you know against the owners? —Yes, I know of it.

4227. And you also suggested to the Chairman that in bad times the owners are careless as to fulfilling the obligations of the Mines Regulation Act?—Decidedly.

4228. If the inspectors do not agree with you, the inspectors would be wrong of course?—Yes.

4229. To remedy that, although the men have the power under the Mines Act, and it was given in response to an application on their behalf, I think you suggested that a check weighman or a miner's agent should have power to inspect?—Yes.

4230. Do you consider a check weighman (having regard to what you said just now as to what check weighmen are very often) competent to go down underground, and to inspect the workings, and to find fault with the operations of a man who has had to pass an examination and obtain a certificate?—What I said was that it was an exception for an impractical miner to be selected as a check weighman, and therefore the great majority are practical men who would know best how to make an examination, and would be independent of the powers of the employers to dismiss them afterwards.

4231. Then with reference to the Government inspections; would you, on reflection, suggest that the Government inspectors are very rarely found in the steam-coal collieries in your district?—They are very rare indeed to be seen in the interior of the colliery. I do not know whether they are visiting the colliery offices.

4232. Or air-ways?—I beg your pardon, I did not say air-ways.

4233. No, I am suggesting to you air-ways? —No; I do not believe that they are in the habit of going into what we may say the interior of the collieries and pushing themselves into all sorts of holes in the collieries. The invariable practice of the inspectors is to go and ascertain from the report books at the top of the colliery.

4234. Are you speaking now of your own knowledge, or from what you have been told? —I am speaking from my own knowledge.

4235. At present, or when you were a collier so many years ago?—When I was a collier and now since I am a miner's agent. But there are exceptions. If they are suspicious of a place being wrongly ventilated, I do not say that they do not, and they have done so at my request; that is to say, when the men have complained to me in some cases that the colliery is not in a safe condition; I have written to the inspectors, and to my knowledge they have gone into the interior of the colliery, but they do not make it a practice of their own unless they are asked by the miner's agents.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

4236. Do you not know that there are deputy inspectors in our district who are in the collieries five to six days a week?—I know that there are deputy inspectors, but that they are in the interior of the collieries I do not know that.

4237. So that if they report to the Home Office that they have inspected certain collieries during the year it is a misrepresentation, is it? —I believe so. I do not say that they do not do it at all, mind you.

4238. Now, as to the dismissal of the workman's delegates. Is that a general thing or would you qualify that?—It is an exception.

4239. An exception?—It is not a general thing.

4240. No?—Oh, no.

4241. It is much more exceptional now than it was formerly?—Yes, it is better since the formation of the sliding scale than it had been previously

4242. That is sixteen years. You complained of men not being employed in adjoining collieries?—Yes.

4243. Was your answer with reference to that point in cases where men had left without notice, as well as where they had left upon giving notice?—It is in cases where they had worked their notice according to the law.

4244. And in cases where they had not worked their notice?—Of course, had they left without any notice, I would not protect them at all.

4245. I think you said to the Chairman that the number of strikes had increased of late?—Increased?

4246. Yes?—I thought that the question was in reference to South Wales in general. I do not believe that I would have been justified to answer the question in that way had I known that it was intended to ask the question as to my district alone.

4247. So that you would not say that the number of strikes, except petty strikes, have increased in our district?—That is what I meant—petty strikes—when I answered the question.

4248. You do not mean general strikes?—Oh, certainly not we have not had a general strike since 1875.

4249. Do you not think with respect to these petty strikes that they are not due to a great extent to the facility which has been provided by you and others for getting matters discussed and brought to Cardiff, which were formerly settled between the manager and the workmen in the mine?—No, the cause of them is to a great extent owing to the delay of the employers dilly-dallying the questions instead of trying to settle them. In fact, in order to escape from a proper payment.

4250. A proper payment from the point of view of the workmen, who are attempting to level up or to violate the sliding scale agreement; is that what you mean?—I do not admit that.

4251. But are you not aware, as a member of the Sliding Scale Committee, which you have referred to previously in your evidence, that the greater portion of the cases which come under

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

the Sliding Scale Committee's consideration, are violations of the sliding scale agreement?—No.

4252. You are not?—No. I do not say but what there have been attempts upon the part of the men to violate the sliding scale agreement; but I argue that if it is 25 per cent. of an attempt by the workmen it has been 75 by the employers.

4253. Now you suggest that there should be an umpire?—Yes.

4254. How would you enforce the award of an umpire assuming that an umpire was appointed?—Well, it would entirely depend no doubt upon the honour of the employers.

4255. Upon the honour of the employers?—Yes, that is to say, if we had an umpire and a decision had gone against the employers we could not compel them to work the colliery unless that colliery were remunerative, I admit that.

4256. And how would you enforce it against the men. Have you ever heard of the men declining to accept an award?—Only in one case.

4257. Only one?—Only one, and the reason given at that time was that the umpire did not take and did not have sufficient time to make a proper investigation into the matter.

4258. Was that umpire a stipendiary magistrate?—It was a judge of the county courts.

4259. So that the judges are not infallible any more than our stipendiaries?—Well, we do not say that they are.

4260. And the men in that case stopped the colliery and refused to accept the award of the judge did they not?—They did not stop the colliery, they said that they would give notice, and before they gave the notice to terminate their contracts according to law, the employers submitted to their terms, or at least nearly to their terms.

4261. Simply they had no alternative between that and stopping the colliery; having gone through an expensive arbitration extending over some time, and the men finding that the arbitrator decided against them having threatened to leave and stop the whole colliery?—When they found out that the umpire did not look into the case as it was necessary, they threatened a notice and they attained their price—or nearly so—I might say 80 per cent. of what they asked. That was simply in one colliery.

4262. Then you mentioned that you are not paid for small coal?—Yes.

4263. And that that was one of the reasons for your receiving notice terminating the present sliding scale agreement?—Yes.

4264. But you did not say that the small coal was included in the cutting price of the large?—No, I did not say so. Why should I say that when I did not believe it.

4265. Do you not know as a collier who has worked for many years in the steam-coal, that the cutting price of the large includes the whole of the small whatever small is made?—No, I never understood the contract originally to mean that. What I know of the original contract was that the men made a contract to fill their coal reasonably clean; and according to the old practice that we had the deductions at that time did not amount to more than about 3 per cent., and we had the introduction of machinery afterwards which resulted in the deductions being something like 20 per cent. if not more, hence my reason for asking payment for the small coal that we never had any compensation for this increase of deductions.

4266. When the mode of estimating was rough and ready in the shape of a cropper you said the average was 3 cwt.?—I beg your pardon.

4267. You said the average was 3 cwt., I think?—No, I did not.

4268. I beg your pardon, that the average was 3 per cent.?—Yes.

4269. But when means of accurately ascertaining the quantity that was sent out were put up, and which you as workmen christened "Billy Fairplay," it turned out to be as you say 20 per cent.?—Yes.

4270. So that you were not cropped sufficiently previously?—But the question is this. I never understood that the original contract meant that the men were responsible for the breakage that would take place in the tram by taking it from the stall to the screen.

4271. You said just now that you were to fill clean?—Yes, reasonably clean.

4272. You seem to have forgotten "*large*" coal, *large* clean coal is the contract?—Very well.

4273. And you as a collier must know that many times this question has been discussed, ever since the adoption of the sliding scale agreement, and it has been admitted that the cutting price of the large covers the small sent out with the large?—Admitted by whom?

4274. Admitted by the workmen's representatives on the sliding scale committee?—Never; never.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

4275. I think you said in reply to Sir William Lewis, that if owing to the reduction of hours of working, a collier got less coal, he would have to receive less money?—Yes.

4276. Would not that increase the cost of production by the general charges having to be divided over fewer tons?—It would to a slight extent, but not to a great extent; because I believe that the production would be much more regular than it is at present, and so compensate the employers for the little extra cost of production.

4277. But still supposing that there were less tons got, we will say by 10 per cent., I will assume 10 per cent., then that 10 per cent. less production must increase the general charges per ton?—If that would have been the case, I would have been ready to admit that, but I do not admit for a moment that the production

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

would have been lessened taking a twelvemonth all round.

4278. Then you say it would not be reduced?—No.

4279. Although they work an hour less?—No, not on the average for a twelvemonth, say.

4280. Then do you think they do not get as much as they can now?—Yes. What I said was, that the men are working more irregularly at present than they would under the eight hours' system, and that they would produce much more coal during the first days of the week than what they are at present.

4281. Would it not be necessary to make it compulsory that they should work eight hours in that case?—No, I do not see that at all; because there is a danger in that: using a weapon of that kind may prevent a man going out when he is ill, the same as I have been obliged to-day.

4282. Is not that provided for by the special rules at all the collieries as to a man going out when he is ill?—No; nothing is said in the special rules about that.

4283 Do you say so?—Yes.

4284. I do not know what your special rules are of course, but let us follow that. Assuming that the amount produced were less, you agree that the working cost per ton must be more?—Yes, I will admit that, assuming that it was the case, but I do not admit it for a moment.

4285. Very well; out of whose pocket ought that to come?—Out of the pockets of the public I expect.

4286. I suppose that you can only get as much for coal as the market warrants, the price current at the day?—There is this to be said about it. If the coal-owners would not get as much as would give them a remuneration, I daresay that they would soon stop their collieries; that is our experience at any rate.

4287. Do you not think it is a very serious thing to stop a colliery which may cost from 100,000*l.* to 200,000*l.*; do you not think they would go on to the very end before they stopped it?—It is serious for the colliery owners, no doubt, and equally so for the men.

4288. At any rate, do I gather from you that you do not think the employers ought to be at the loss?—I believe that they can take a little less remuneration than they get at present.

4289. Do you think that they have so much profit that they can afford to have less; is that what you mean?—Yes.

4290. Do you think that that is so throughout the country?—I do not say that that is so throughout the country, but taking the great majority they can afford to have less remuneration than they have at present.

4291. I should like quite to understand this; how you have come to the conclusion that a man will get as much coal in eight hours as he does in nine?—I did not say that.

4292. You did not?—No.

4293. Then does it come back to this: that you think that if he were only allowed to work

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

eight hours he would work more days?—Exactly so.

4294. Then why should he not be bound?—Because it would be a dangerous weapon, as I have said before, to prevent men going out when really necessary.

4295. In a case of illness you mean?—Yes, and also it is necessary for workmen to attend to different duties of society under other circumstances than being ill.

4296. Could you name them?—Well, we have a great per-centage, if not 50 per cent. of our workmen, religious people, and they are carrying out their duties in that respect, and it is necessary sometimes, rather than a man should stay out all day, for him to leave those duties at the half of the day, say.

4297. But would he not have 16 hours for his religious duties?—Well, that is true.

4298. Are not they enough?—Well, that may be the case, but I say that I would not bind the workmen under any circumstances to be in the pit all round through the eight hours, so that they would not have a chance to get out.

4299. That is to say you would prevent the employer allowing him to work more than eight hours, but that he should be at liberty not to work eight hours?—I might say this, that I do not approve of the men, and that it is not the practice in our district to permit the men to go out from the pit unless they give a sufficient reason to the manager; that is the practice with us at present.

4300. You could scarcely carry on any works without that, could you?—Well, not successfully.

Sir *Edward Harland.*

4301. In the earlier portion of your evidence you stated, I think, that there is about 25 per cent. of unskilled labour?—Yes.

4302. Which is brought to bear upon the work of the colliery, and to which you strenuously objected?—Yes.

4303. I see by the Act of Parliament to which you refer that the definition of a skilled workman is laid down as being one who has been say at least two years working about the colliery in some form or other?—Working in the face, I think.

4304. It does not say the face, but it says about the colliery?—Very well, yes.

(*Chairman.*) "In or about the face" are the words.

Sir *Edward Harland.*

4305. Then you also referred to its being a risk personally to the skilled workmen if an unskilled workman were to be put with him to do the work?—Yes.

4306. But that the employers to increase the number of men brought to bear upon the work evaded that or got over it by putting two unskilled workmen to work together?—Yes.

4307. Might that not be looked upon by the owner as a very reasonable method of teaching the unskilled workmen and turning them into

Sir *Edward Harland*—continued.

skilled workmen?—Certainly not, because if you put two unskilled men together who is going to learn them?

4308. Is there no instance where the colliery proprietor puts a skilled workman on to show them how to do the work?—No. Well, we have a system of this kind which is called the contracting system, which is one and the same as the sweating system. The contractors will have a certain amount of working places, and they are put there in order to teach them and to sweat them, and to get money into their own pockets for that.

4309. I suppose you will admit that the skilled workmen were once upon a time unskilled themselves?—Well, in the majority of the cases with us underground, the boys are brought in at 12 years of age, and they are trained up from their childhood to be skilled

4310. But would you not consider that it is quite possible for intelligent men not too old, with the opportunities of two or three years' work with other working men,—skilled men—also to become skilled men?—Yes, but I believe that they should pay for their learning.

4311. Pay for it?—Yes.

4312. Do they not pay for it by having to be content with less wages during that time?—Well, they have to be content with less wages, it is true, but the one that learns them he has nothing for his labour.

4313. Has the man who is teaching them any more serious or more arduous work to perform whilst he is teaching them?—Yes.

4314 Or does he not get some assistance physically by the work of these other men?—No, not at all.

4315. Would not this objection to unskilled workmen being brought in really be found to lie—the root of it—in its having a tendency, perhaps, to prevent the skilled workman from making what the owner might call excessive payments of wages by reason of the scarcity of skilled workmen?—I would not say excessive, but I have no doubt but what it has been the case that they are the means of preventing the men from having sufficient wages, and that there is a feeling owing to that.

4316. I have understood from your evidence and that of others before you that the last two or three years coal mining has been very active indeed?—Yes.

4317. We may naturally conclude therefore that in that activity there must have been an excessive demand for extra labour?—Yes.

4318. When the colliery proprietor finds that the market is good, and that he can get a more ready sale for his coal, but that he is limited in the output of his colliery by reason of the scarcity of men, or the limited number of men at his command, why should you object to his seeking the method of increasing the number by putting on unskilled, and gradually turning them into skilled workmen?—I have not suggested at the first that they should have been prevented from being employed at the colliery. What I argue is this that they should not have a place of their own, unless they are trained up by skilled workmen; I have not stated that we would put a barrier against the employer, and that he should not employ them at all, but that they should not have been employed and have a place of their own unless they are trained up by skilled workmen.

4319. I understand you to mean by a place of their own a berth of their own in one of the workings, a face, a stall, is that it?—Yes.

4320. Then, after a year or a couple of years' training, as we have just been having described to us, might they not then be fit to have a stall or place of their own?—After they have been trained if they are trained by skilled workmen, certainly they may, but a man who is coming to work underground who has no knowlege of it at all can never be as good a workman unless he is trained by some skilled workman.

4321. Do you take these unskilled workmen at once into your Association, or do these workmen object to at once joining your Association?—We do take them into our Association.

4322. You would?—We do.

4323. Then do you object to them so much after they have become members of your Association?—Certainly.

4324. Still you object to them?—Oh, yes; that is to say, not to give them working places of their own unless they are properly trained up.

4325. Then are they willing to subscribe to your Association without being placed on an equal footing with the other members of the Association in their work and the power of earning?—They are placed in the same position, and I do not know why they should not afterwards.

4326. You referred to the question of hours, so far as the proprietor is concerned, and I understood that the question of hours was not to be looked upon the same as the question of wages; in other words, your remarks I gathered to mean that the hours might be reduced, but that that would not necessitate a loss to the employer which would be equivalent to that which he would have lost if he had paid higher wages. How do you balance the account. If less work be done, and the expenses of the colliery are to be carried on, how is the workman to earn as much unless the price per ton be increased to him?—What I stated is this: that a collier or a coal hewer would not produce as much coal in eight hours as he would in nine hours. Take the production of a colliery all round for a twelvemonth, under the eight hours' system they would produce as much coal as they do now because the production would be ever so much more regular owing to the fact that there is so much losing time at present, and then there would not be as much losing time.

4327. Do you not consider that the lessening of the hours of labour is equivalent to increasing and necessarily increasing the cost of the coal?

(*Chairman.*) I think what the witness means to say is that under that shortening of hours which he advocates, the individual collier would

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

4355. Would he have more than four?—No, that is something about it.

4356. Then what else have our inspectors to do besides inspecting the collieries?—Attending inquests, and writing, no doubt, to the Home Secretary their reports.

4357. Are they brought up to London sometimes to give evidence before the Board of Trade?—It is you—the London people—who know that best; I presume that is the case.

4358. According to your experience?—Yes, they have.

4359. I must say that we are very grateful that we have three instead of one, as we had for a number of years. How many inspections is it possible, as an average, for these inspectors to make of our collieries in South Wales in the twelvemonth?—I have not gone into that question, I only want to tell the Commissioners that the inspection is inadequate at present; I am positive of that; but, as you say, owing to the enormous duty they have put upon them they are inadequate, whatever could have been done by them, there is no doubt about that, in my mind, at any rate.

Mr. *Fowler.*

4360. Do any of the three inspectors speak Welsh?—No, I do not believe they do.

Sir *William Lewis.*

4361. Do you not know one that speaks Welsh?—Mr. Robson does not at any rate.

4362. Do you know Mr. Sims who was recently appointed?—No, I have not had the pleasure of seeing him.

4363. Two out of the three speak Welsh?—That is a good job.

Mr. *Austin.*

4364. How long has the Association you represent been in existence?—For the last 11 years.

4365. Has it increased or decreased in numbers lately?—It has increased lately.

4366. You stated that 25 per cent. were unskilled workmen, and that the majority of that 25 came from the agricultural districts?—Yes.

4367. You are anxious that the miners should pass an examination, to obtain certificates, but if that is so what would you do with the agricultural labourers?—Of course they have to go under an examination. I do not say that the colliery owners should not employ them at all, but I say that they should not have been employed as coal hewers unless they go under an examination with a view to having a certificate of competency.

4368. But the agricultural labourers having low wages naturally come into the large centres, and they have not the skilled knowledge necessary for the work there?—That is so.

Mr. *Austin*—continued.

4369. Did it ever enter into your mind to retain the agricultural labourer on the land as a solution of that?—I did not understand you, I beg your pardon; repeat it again if you please.

4370. Did it ever enter your mind the necessity of keeping the agricultural labourers on the land as a solution of the difficulty?—There is no doubt about it, but that it is necessary to do that and it should be done.

4371. It should be done?—Yes, certainly.

4372. By legislative action?—By legislative action.

4373. You speak now as a miner from the knowledge acquired for so many years that it is purely the agricultural labourers who come into the mining districts?—I would not say purely.

4374. The great majority?—The great majority.

4375. And it has a great tendency to lower wages?—Yes.

4376. You referred to some circulars being sent out by certain colliery proprietors to prevent men getting employment?—Yes.

4377. Did that prevail to any great extent?—No, I could not say that it is a general thing.

4378. Was there any action taken by the Union over that?—No.

4379. Do you think that those employers should be brought under the law of intimidation as well as the workmen in that respect?—Yes, I think they should.

4380. As regards the safety of the employment, you stated that at a meeting you attended 18 out of 400 only saw an inspector ever in the interior of a colliery?—Yes.

4381. In your experience is it usual for the inspectors to go into the interior of the colliery?—No, it is not usual.

4382. Where they are most required, they do not go, is that so?—Exactly so.

Sir *John Gorst.*

4383. These agricultural labourers that you speak of, do they come from South Wales or from the neighbouring counties?—They come from all parts of the country.

4384. From a distance?—Yes.

4385. Do you mean from England?—They are coming from Devonshire, Herefordshire, and North Wales and South Wales.

4386. Do you know what the wages of the agricultural labourers are in the counties in the South Wales mining district?—No; but I know that they are much lower than the colliery wages.

4387. Then an agricultural labourer coming into a colliery gets at once a rise of wages?—Yes.

The witness withdrew.

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Mr. *Dale*—continued.

were strikes of particular collieries in our own district.

4406. Have you had any general strike in your district; that is throughout the whole of the district?—No.

4407. Not for many years?—Not for many years.

4408. Have you any arbitration board or other organisation common to the employers and yourselves for adjusting differences?—There is a general board for South Wales and Monmouthshire which many of our employers are members of. It is called the Sliding Scale Committee belonging to the Coal Owners' Association for Monmouth and South Wales. Belonging to that Association there are no less than 21 of our collieries, but there are about 42 collieries in the district that are not members of that Association. Still the 21 collieries in the district employ a greater number of hands than the other 42 collieries employed. The collieries out of the Association are chiefly comparatively small collieries. The largest collieries in the district belong to the Coal Owners' Association of Monmouthshire and South Wales; and I may say that the wages in general are governed by that Association or by the sliding scale. The prices as I daresay you are aware are realised by an accountant for each party, that is an accountant on behalf of the employers and an accountant on behalf of the workmen. The committee is constituted of so many members from each side. I happen to have been a member of that committee since the formation of that scale from the commencement of 1880.

4409. About how many are there on each side of that committee?—Eleven on each side. I may say that although we have that sliding scale for the regulation of wages in existence I am sorry to say that it has not been the means of preventing strikes and lock-outs in the district. During the last two years I may say that it has cost our Association, although we are only about 4,000 members, for strike pay no less than 3,000*l*. I daresay that would entail a loss in wages of from 10,000*l*. to 11,000*l*. We are sorry to have to report these things, but still there they are. We cannot wink at them. We believe as workmen that it will be possible to improve the sliding scale arrangement. For instance, we meet from time to time and discuss questions of grievances, but if the committee or parties appointed by the committee cannot arrange matters between themselves there is no power whatever of calling in an umpire for settling the question, and we believe that if the sliding scale arrangement was so improved as to give the parties appointed to deal with the questions of dispute the power of calling in an independent umpire strikes and lock-outs would shortly become things of the past.

4410. Could you describe to us a little more exactly the functions of the Sliding Scale Committee. The name would rather seem to imply that it was a committee formed for the purpose of arranging and carrying out a general sliding scale; and if that was its only function, it would appear that till there came to be some question of revising the scale, there would be no continuing functions for a Sliding Scale Committee. Therefore, in spite of its name, is it a body taking cognisance during the currency of a sliding scale of local disputes?—Yes, when questions do arise which either party considers are a justification for making what we would say was an appeal for an appeal for an alteration in the mode of working or the prices paid, we should appeal in the first place of course to the managers or the officials of the colliery. They say that they have no power to deal with the question, because the colliery is in the Coal Owners' Association, and under those circumstances they say, that inasmuch as there is a Sliding Scale Committee in existence, and that they belong to the Coal Owners' Association, all questions of dispute whatever they may be must go before the Sliding Scale Committee. I would say this, that I believe that it would have been possible if the officials wished to use their power that many questions could have been prevented going to the Sliding Scale Committee, and they could have been settled at home. I really believe this; that many of the officials use the Sliding Scale Committee as a sort of cloak, and consequently send the questions to the Sliding Scale Committee to be dealt with, rather than deal with the questions themselves.

4411. Then the questions that the Sliding Scale Committee would take cognisance of, would be not merely questions of whether the sliding scale was by either party faithfully carried out, but it would take cognisance of any questions that had arisen at a particular colliery by reason of the changed underground mining conditions for instance?—That is so.

4412. In fact it is a committee of conciliation for the purpose of discussing, and if possible adjusting local disputes?—Yes, for adjusting local disputes.

4413. But you think that it sometimes fails to do so by reason of there not being an umpire to whom any questions of difference could be referred?—Yes, to which questions of difference may be referred.

4414. Have you any other observations to make with regard to the labour difficulties of your district?—With reference to the hours of labour, I may say that we believe the hours at present are too long, and we should like to see the hours reduced. We believe that eight hours from bank to bank would be sufficient, particularly in our district, for any person to be underground. I may say that in our district we have many very thin seams, varying in thickness from 33 inches down to 18 inches. I daresay that there would be about 25 of these collieries working coal at a lower thickness than even 33 inches. We have about 12 collieries in the district working coal below 24 inches, and we consider that when a collier works in those thin seams, lying down on his side from morning to evening, and swinging a pick as we say from 3 lbs. to 3½ lbs. weight for six or seven hours, that man does not want much more. We believe

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Mr. *Dale*—continued.

4434. To make a claim or send in notices to enforce it?—They said to make a claim for an advance of wages was a violation of the agreement.

4435. And hence that they could not entertain the question?—That they could not entertain the question.

4436. Did you understand that to be the answer of a united Sliding Scale Committee?—That was the answer of the employers' side, but our side was quite willing to deal with the question.

4437. Then having got that answer in the first instance the notices ran out?—The notices ran out.

4438. And the men ceased work?—Yes, the men on the first occasion were out for a week, and then the question was referred again to the Sliding Scale Committee, but there was no power given to appoint an umpire. Consequently after the first week the men returned to work thinking that the question would be dealt with by the Sliding Scale Committee. After being on for about two months the men saw no signs of the question being settled, and there being a refusal to have an umpire the men came out again, and they were idle then for nine weeks. After this the question was again brought before the Sliding Scale Committee and two gentlemen, as I have said, one from the employers' and one from the workmen's side, were appointed to deal with the question.

4439. Was that appointment during the second coming out of the men?—During the second strike, but upon these grounds, that the men should return to work before these two gentlemen would deal with the question; the men at the end of nine weeks did return to work, and it was understood that power was given to these gentlemen to appoint an umpire, providing that they failed to agree; but it so happened that the employers' representative blankly refused to appoint an umpire, about which I myself have asked him since, and he said in the presence of the Sliding Scale Committee that he would not appoint an umpire; that he had been against the principle of an umpire all his lifetime, and he would not have one in this case. Therefore the question has been lingering on from that day to this.

4440. The men working on the same terms as those on which they were employed when they first came out?—A change in the mode of working has taken place, and the employers paid them a certain price pending the arrangement, but so far no arrangement has been made.

4441. The employers have improved the terms of service in some manner?—Yes.

4442. But not to the full extent of the men's claim?—Not to the full extent of the men's request.

4443. I have dwelt rather long upon this case because it seemed to me that the question for this Commission chiefly to probe is the question of difficulties arising between employers and employed, how they arise, and in what manner the attempt has been made to adjust them. Pray

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

proceed?—We look at the sliding scale arrangement as it exists at present as being very defective, or as we may say a blot in the arrangement, because there is no compulsion to appoint an umpire in a case of dispute. I do not mean to say but what many of the cases have arisen from the workmen's side, but on the other hand I may say this, that there are cases that have arisen from the employer's side which they have refused to carry out, although resolved upon by the Sliding Scale Committee. I remember one case in particular that came before the Sliding Scale Committee where the Joint Committee of both employers and employed gave a decision in favour of the workmen; the employers of that particular colliery on that occasion actually refused to carry out that decision and consequently the colliers were out for 11 weeks. After 11 weeks the employers submitted to the decision as passed by the Joint Committee.

4444. How long ago did this happen?—That would be about two and a half years ago.

4445. Do you approve of a sliding scale system for regulating wages?—I do. I think it is one of the best means for regulating wages that could be adopted, but as I said before if there was an umpire appointed to settle cases of dispute—(I do not mean that the umpire should sit at the Joint Committee continually, but that he should be called in case of necessity)—it is possible that many cases might be arranged by both parties, and could be arranged by both parties, and in case of a failure it is essential that an umpire should be called in, and his decision should be final and binding on both parties. It would save an amount of loss in wages, and it would also save a great loss in the neighbourhood.

4446. Do I take it that you are advocating the appointment of an umpire chiefly, or perhaps exclusively, in relation to that part of the Sliding Scale Committee's work which might be called Joint Committee work?—Yes.

4447. Do you think that it would be necessary to have an umpire to determine any point of difference that might arise as to the basis of a sliding scale?—Well, I think the basis of a sliding scale may be arranged.

4448. It is a matter of negotiation for both parties?—It is a matter of negotiation for both parties.

4449. Have you any other suggestion to make?—Well, there is the question of the black list. This happens to be very black in some of our places.

4450. What do you desire to say upon that subject?—Well, I think in cases of dispute, particularly under the present arrangement, that where workmen give in their usual notices, whether it should be a fortnight or a month's notice, or whatever it may be, they ought to be free afterwards to go and seek employment where they can get it; but I am sorry to say that in these cases where strikes do arise the workmen are not altogether free. I could refer to one case in particular where the workmen had given their usual month's notice and had worked out

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

the calendar month, and left their employers, and went to the employers and asked for a discharge; the employers refused to give a discharge. The men without a discharge went and got work elsewhere, and worked about a fortnight or three weeks, as the case may be, and one Monday morning no less than 30 of the men were prevented by the officials of a certain colliery from going down the pit, merely because they belonged to a certain colliery which was on strike.

4451. They were then in the employment of the colliery which prevented their going down?—They had been employed for a fortnight or three weeks previously in that colliery.

4452. Were they not entitled to a notice?—Yes, they were entitled to a month's notice. We could have sued those employers for a month's notice, but we thought it was rather hard to sue those employers who had given the workmen employment, and the workmen themselves did not feel that they ought to take those steps.

4453. Was that a case in which the colliery that was idle was in the Masters' Association?—Yes, and the second colliery was in the Masters' Association also.

4454. You must not infer from the question that I am about to ask, that I am implying an opinion at all. Would you draw any distinction between, on the one hand, putting an individual man or a few men upon the black list and preventing them in their individual capacity from getting work, and, on the other hand, simply abstaining as an owner of a colliery from employing a general body of men who for the moment had some dispute with another owner?—Well, no; where an individual may fall out with his employer and leave his colliery, I do not know that that person is interfered with, but the question of the black list in our district applies mostly to a strike that may take place at the colliery at large. Where the whole of the colliery, or the greatest portion of the colliery, may be idle during the strike. I would not say that there is interference where some individual falls out with some of the officials, and wishes to leave the colliery.

4455. Take the case of the owner to whom you referred a few minutes ago, who refused to carry out the decision of the Sliding Scale Committee, and whose men I suppose thereupon suspended work?—Yes.

4456. Would you have thought it a proper thing to restrain the members of your Association from taking work at that colliery?—Well, there are none of our members who ever applied for power to go to those collieries.

4457. What would be your view as to that?—Well, we should prevent it.

Sir *William Lewis.*

4458. You should prevent them?—Yes, as far we could, because there the decision had been given by the employers and the employed.

Mr. *Dale.*

4459. Then supposing it had been the men of a particular colliery who had refused to carry

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

out the decision of the Sliding Scale Committee and suspended work, would you have thought it a proper thing that the employers' officials should abstain from engaging them?—That is a question which has never been brought before our notice, and we are not dealing with it, and I leave that to the other side.

4460. Is there any other point on which you desire to offer evidence?—With reference to the safety of the collieries, I may say one word with regard to the number of inspectors; we consider that there are too few. Far be it from me to say a word against either of the inspectors in our district. Whoever may be appointed we could not get gentlemen to do the work more satisfactorily than those who do it at present, as far as their abilities will allow them. But we consider that looking at the immense number of collieries in our district it is a matter of impossibility for those inspectors to go all round and inspect those collieries in such a way as we consider necessary.

Sir *William Lewis.*

Is this a question before us?

Mr. *Dale.*

I think it is; our inquiry includes inspection.

Mr. *Abraham.*

We have decided ourselves that it is a question that ought to come before us.

Mr. *Dale* (*to the Witness*).

4461. Please go on?—Looking at the number of collieries for three inspectors, I see by the returns that the number of collieries is 372. We know that some of these collieries are very large collieries indeed, and the distances that these three gentlemen have to travel, in my opinion, makes it a matter of impossibility for them to inspect the collieries, and to attend inquests as they have to do from time to time. Looking at the number of fatal accidents which take place in our district—which I believe is in excess of any district in Great Britain—when we consider these things I say that if there was an additional number of sub-inspectors appointed and these sub-inspectors were appointed from the ranks of practical workmen we believe that many accidents that do take place at present might be prevented. I hope it will not be thought for a moment that I lay any charge of neglect of duty upon the inspectors that we have at present; there is nothing whatever of that kind. I think we will see that the number of fatal accidents for 1890 was 146, and the number of deaths 241.

Mr. *Fowler.*

4462. Was that in these 372 collieries?—Ye

Mr. *Dale.*

4463. Do the union and non-union men your colliery district work together and r together?—Yes, so far we have had no difficu in that direction.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

4464. Do you wish to say anything about the length of notice required for ending engagements?—The notice at present we do not dispute.

4465. Is there any other point that you wish to bring under our notice before my colleagues examine you?—I think that the other points may be left to my other friends.

Mr. *Fowler.*

4466. How many non-union men have you in your district?—2,000, or about that number; I would not say exactly.

4467. And how many Union men?—About 4,000.

4468. How many collieries do you consider that an inspector could properly inspect in the course of a year?—That would depend upon the size of the colliery.

4469. I know; but taking an average of these 372 collieries, how many do you think a man could do in the ordinary business year?—The sizes of the collieries vary very much. We have some collieries in our district where they employ no more than 50 hands both above and below ground, and then we have other collieries where they employ 300 and 400 and 500.

4470. Well, then, can you give us the number that one man could inspect?—You would have two or three workmen at the same working place in one colliery working on the principle of long wall whilst in another place they are working on the principle of pillar and stall. The inspector would not be able to get through as many collieries on the pillar and stall principle in the same time as on the long wall principle.

4471. But, putting all these items into the calculation, give me the average number that you think there should be under one man?—I do not think that I could give you an average, because it would depend entirely on what would be the other work of the inspector. For instance, when a fatal accident takes place the inspector has to attend the inquests, and it may be that the inquests this year may be more numerous than last year or next year.

4472. But that is not answering my question. We have got to deal with the condition of things which exists; a certain number of collieries large and small; a certain description of work varying; a certain number of accidents happening; but what average number of inspectors do you think there should be, taking the average number of collieries or the average number of men. You come to us and say that three is insufficient for 372 collieries, and I want to know how many inspectors are sufficient for these 372 collieries?—I should be hardly prepared to say what number.

4473. Would six be sufficient?—Six would certainly improve the condition of things.

4474. Do you think the present three would be sufficient if they were supplemented by a considerable accession of sub-inspectors?—Yes.

Mr. *Fowler*—continued.

4475. Do you think that three first-class inspectors having a proper number of sub-inspectors would do what you require?—I do not understand that there are three first-class inspectors. There is one chief inspector and two sub-inspectors at present. Mr. Robson is the chief inspector.

4476. I understand that you do not object to the wages being fixed on the sliding scale principle if there is an umpire presiding over the committee that fixes the scale?—I do not mean that an umpire should preside over the Committee. I quite agree as I have already said with the principle of the wages being regulated by a sliding scale, but I say that if a case of dispute should arise between both parties an umpire should be in readiness I would not go so far as to claim that an umpire should always sit with the Committee, but that there should be an umpire appointed.

4477. Assuming that there is this umpire you are in favour of the Sliding Scale Committee?—Yes.

4478. Do you know anything of the mode in which wages are settled in South Staffordshire?—No, I do not.

4479. They have a board presided over by a chairman, and that chairman has practically the casting vote, and he is the umpire—you say you are not familiar with that?—No.

4480. Well, how would you object to that scheme in South Wales, that is of there being a permanent chairman who would of course have the casting vote if the two parties ever came into conflict, but who being perfectly familiar, by his constantly sitting there, with the disputes would perhaps be more qualified than a man called in *ad hoc*?—I should have no objection, as I say, to an umpire sitting there continually, but if there were any objection from the other side I should not object to an umpire being called in when required.

4481. Provided that there should be an umpire when a difference arises, then you think that the Sliding Scale Committee is the best mode of settling these disputes?—I believe so.

4482. Now, with reference to enforcing a decision of the Committee—the refusal to employ at a colliery the men who are out on strike and the refusal of the Union to allow the men to work at a colliery which has not conceded the terms proposed. I suppose they are both munitions of war on either side?—They are.

4483. If your Union were strong enough, that is if instead of comprising 4,000 men it had the whole 6,000, you would then be equally as strong as the masters on that point?—Well, I should not like to make it a question of testing our strength.

4484. No, but I am dealing with your case; you bring a case before us of oppression, as you put it?—Yes.

4485. Here are men who having struck were prevented from getting employment at any other

Mr. *Fowler*—continued.

colliery, is that not the case you put to us?—Yes.

4486. Now, supposing that you were strong enough to say that all the other collieries should immediately stop if this was persisted in, that evil would be remedied?—Well, we never go in so far as the stopping of other collieries which are not connected in any way with a strike; we have not gone thus far.

4487. Well, let me put this case: supposing that one colliery which is owned by a member of the Masters' Association refuses to employ men because they have been concerned in a strike, and that strike has been sanctioned by your Union, would you consider yourselves justified in saying that then there should be a universal strike?—No, I would not go in for that principle of a universal strike at all.

4488. You would not?—No.

4489. Then how do you propose to protect these unfortunate men who were sacrificed?—We should say that the men ought to be permitted to work elsewhere if they worked out their legal notice, but that no power———

4490. How is that to be done; what do you suggest to us that we should recommend which would enable that to be done?—If the question of dispute between both parties was decided by an umpire, then I say that both parties would be equally bound, both employers and employed.

4491. Supposing that a specific colliery refused to be bound by that?—Well, we should have nothing more to do then than what we do at present, fight the question.

4492. You would not have any other remedy then but the universal strike?—We have never resorted to a universal strike, and I may say again that I would not advise it.

4493. No, I am not suggesting it; I only want to see what the remedy is. Then, practically, as the thing works now, your Union has not strength enough to prevent a black list being put in force?—No, it has not.

4494. Do you think it is possible to prevent a black list being put in force by legislation?—Well, I should like to see the day dawn when there will be no necessity for black lists.

4495. You say that the black list is a gross injustice, that is your position?—Yes.

4496. The way in which it is worked?—Yes.

4497. Now, I want you to tell us as a Commission what do you propose that we should do to obviate that injustice?—To remove the black list entirely.

4498. How?—Well, by legislation.

4499. How are you to legislate?—If the employers are found guilty of using the black list then I say the employers ought to be punished.

4500. That is, you say that if an employer refuses to employ a man he is to be subjected to penal consequences for not doing so?—No, oh no, I did not say that.

Mr. *Fowler*—continued.

4501. How then; I want to see how it is to be done?—What I say is this, you may refuse to employ a workman, but after you have employed a workman, for another employer to interfere with the right of that workman's being employed is quite a different thing.

4502. But that is not the case you put to us, the case you put to us, as I understood it was this: there was a colliery on strike, and the men who were at work at the colliery on strike were prevented from getting work at any other colliery on account of their having struck at that colliery?—Yes, that is so.

4503. Very well, then what I want to ascertain from you is whether the mode of dealing with that case is by counter organisation on the part of the men or whether it is by legislation. I understand you to say that it is not to be by counter organisation on the part of the men, but by legislation?—What I understood—if I misunderstood you I am very sorry—was this, with regard to that particular case there were 30 men who had been employed, and those 30 men were prevented from going to their work on one morning, and I think that that is a case that ought to be taken up, and that the employers ought to be punished for it.

4504. Then it comes to the same thing, that you think it should be done by legislation?—By legislation.

4505. I suppose you are familiar with other trade organisations and other Trade Unions in other employments, would not that difficulty in most of the other great trades be promptly and at once met by reprisals on behalf of the Union against a master so doing?—I happen to be in the capacity now of a representative of the workman, and not of the employers.

4506. I am pointing out to you the workmen's case. I want you to explain to me why it is better to have it by legislation than it is to have it by trade organisation?—Because, in the first place, with reference to trade organisation, the employers would not acknowledge it.

4507. They would acknowledge it if all their collieries were out on strike, if all their collieries were immediately stopped?—Then it would depend on the strength of the Employers' Association.

4508. Yes, but have not some of the greatest strikes in England arisen under the same circumstances that we are now dealing with?—I do not know, I am only speaking of our own industry.

4509. I may take it from you that legislation is your solution of this difficulty?—Yes.

4510. And not counter organisation?—Not counter organisation.

4511. Then with reference to hours, you say that eight hours from bank to bank is sufficient for a man?—Yes.

4512. And that your average is nine?—Our average is nine.

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Mr. *Fowler*—continued.

4513. Has there been any attempt by organisation amongst the men to reduce the nine to eight?—We had a conference with the employers in 1890, I think, or in 1889, in South Wales, where we then asked the employers to admit the principle of eight hours, but the employers did not see their way clear. After that we had a general conference with the employers, with the representatives of the Miners' Association of Great Britain, and with the miners' representatives of South Wales, and we met here in London on two occasions, but we failed to bring about any sort of arrangement between ourselves, although we believed then as we believe now that eight hours from bank to bank would be a sufficient number of hours for any person to work underground. Having failed in that direction we think now there is nothing left but to appeal to the Legislature.

4514. Are you familiar with the difference in wages between the colliers of South Wales and the colliers in Northumberland?—Only from report.

4515. Do they get as much for their limited number of hours—I suppose theirs is between seven and eight—do they get as high a wage as you get for your nine?—Yes, they do.

4516. And turn out as good work—as much work?—I suppose according to the returns that the north of England collier turns out more coal than is turned out from South Wales, but you must understand this——

4517. I know the difference?—They work under a different system.

4518. Certainly, but you do not think that it would be to the disadvantage of the owner of the Welsh colliery if he had no longer hours in his colliery than the Northumbrian colliery has?—I do not pretend to know exactly what is the number of hours' winding in the northern districts.

4519. Supposing that the workmen of South Wales were unanimously of the opinion that eight hours was long enough to work from bank to bank, could they not enforce that opinion by a general strike?—It is possible we could do it, but as I said before I should be very sorry to test our strength in that direction.

4520. I do not want to argue, and I am not for a moment arguing whether it is a right or a wrong remedy, I only want to logically work the thing out; supposing all the workmen in South Wales said, we will not work more than eight hours, do you think the masters would stand out against such a condition of things?—Well, I really do not know.

4521. Would it not bring the whole thing to a dead-lock?—It would bring the whole thing to a dead-lock.

4522. In the present condition of South Wales you think it is better that the Legislature should enforce that?—I do.

Mr. *Fowler*—continued.

4523. Without coming to the extreme point of war?—I do.

Mr. *Burt.*

4524. You have no females employed about the pits in your district, have you?—Not in our district.

4525. Have they ever been employed within your recollection in that part of Wales?—I do not know that any females have been employed in or about any of the collieries in our district for the last 15 or 18 years, but I am speaking now of our own immediate district.

4526. They were employed prior to, say, 15 years ago, am I to gather that from your answer?—Just a few on the banks discharging the coal and the like of that.

4527. Has the system died out or were steps taken by the workmen to stop it?—It died out. Appeal was made from time to time by the workmen to reduce female labour, and the employers very often asked the men, "Well, what are you going to do with them." We naturally said, "When one goes, do not employ any more," and it naturally died out in that way.

4528. You mentioned that the recognised hours are nine from bank to bank. Then you said that there were cases of men being employed less than the nine, and of some being employed over the nine. Are there many employed more than the nine hours per day?—What I mean by saying that they are in the pit more than nine hours is because of the nine hours' winding; it would be impossible for those men to be out of the pit in the nine hours. You see we have many collieries in our district now which are not kept off winding for the whole of the day, and under those circumstances the man does come up, perhaps, under the nine hours. Then we have many collieries in our district where there are drifts or slants or levels where the men go in and out without any interference by the officials.

4529. The system recognised is nine hours' winding, is it?—Yes, that is the system.

4530. So that you could not have nine hours from bank to bank in the greater number of cases?—That is where the pits are kept off continually winding for the nine hours. As I said before, there would be in those cases men in the pit more than nine hours.

4531. Then I think you said that with regard to those under 16 years of age the nine hours is carried out?—We have had no cases brought before our Association whatever. No complaints in any way, and I am glad to believe that it is perfectly fairly carried out.

4532. You said that 54 hours per week was in operation?—Yes.

4533. Is that the way the nine hours are divided; it is six days, I presume, of nine hours each?—No, not exactly. When I speak of nine hours, I mean the nine hours' principle, and 54 hours per week. The rate of hours in

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

our district is this: On Monday we work nine hours, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday we work 9½ hours, and on Saturday then we work two hours less.

4534. As you are aware, it may be 10 hours per day and not more than 54 hours per week, so that you have in some cases, I suppose, both men and boys working 9½ hours per day. I gather that from your last answer?—As I say, on those four days the number of hours acknowledged is 9½ hours, but in some cases in South Wales of course they knock off at seven hours on Monday, but we work the nine hours on the Monday and we gain another two hours during the next four days, and we knock off those two hours on the Saturday.

4535. Then, are the hours the same, speaking generally, quite irrespective of age—I mean the hours of the coal getters and the hours of the boys, those under 16 and those above 16—are they the same, speaking generally?—We have cases where the lads are sent out on Saturday at 12 o'clock.

4536. That would be to comply with the Act?—Yes, to comply with the Act. Then we have other cases, again, in the thin seams, and also, we may say, in the pitch seams, where the measures are very steep, where the collier only cuts the coal, and where we have lads filling it and carting the coal down to the shaft, and trammers tramming it out; but the collier, perhaps, may to-day (or perhaps all the week), if the place be middling easy, as you may say, be able to cut the quantity of coal in about six or six and a half or seven hours. Then if that person was working in a drift or level, no one would interfere with his coming out, as long as he did not cut a less quantity of coal, and so did not interfere with the output of the coal; and that man would be permitted to leave his employment in that time.

4537. Are those men and boys engaged in getting out the coal to the shaft employed in any case for a longer period than the coal getter at the face?—Yes, in that case they would be.

4538. The coal getters are, as a rule, paid, I presume, by the piece or by the quantity of coal they produce?—By the ton.

4539. By the ton?—Yes, and by the yard.

4540. And are the other classes of workmen paid by time or by the piece?—By the ton, chiefly. Where they cart and fill they are paid chiefly by the ton. That would only refer—I should wish you to understand this—to the steep measures, and also to the thin measures that we have in the district. In other collieries again, of course, the general style of South Wales is worked, that is, the collier would cut and fill his own coal.

4541. With regard to your sliding scale, has it been in existence for a long period?—Yes; there was a sliding scale established, first of all, which I think came into operation in 1876—on the first day of that year. That sliding scale was in operation for some time, when the employers gave notice to terminate that scale.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

Another scale was established at the commencement of 1880, and, I think, came into operation about February 1880, if I remember rightly. That sliding scale has been in existence ever since, but it has been revised on several occasions.

4542. Then from 1876 you have had a sliding scale almost continuously?—From 1880 we have.

4543. From 1880 continuously?—Yes.

4544. Has it given general satisfaction, apart from this question of the umpire—I mean, has the scale worked satisfactorily?—I think this, that the last revision, or the last improvement has given the greatest satisfaction. The scale has been considerably improved since 1880.

4545. Is the scale self-adjusting or is it modified by the sliding scale committee from time to time?—The scale has been revised, as I say, by the sliding scale committee from time to time. The wages are governed in this way: 10 per cent. for every shilling advance in market. There is a standard price set down, so much per ton in accordance with the rates of wages paid in December 1879. Those are the standard rates of wages for the standard selling price of coal in market. For every shilling per ton advance in the price of coal, 10 per cent. is given to the workman. I may say, of course, to put it more simply, that we are not waiting until a shilling advance takes place in market. In the first place, in 1880, for every fourpence advance in market we had a 2½ per cent. advance; now under the present sliding scale, we have 1¼ per cent. for every three-halfpence, or we may say 2½ per cent. for every threepence, which brings 10 per cent for every shilling. I am glad to say that the last arrangement has given greater satisfaction than any arrangement that was ever made previously to that. I would say again that if it could be improved in that direction by the way of appointing an umpire for settling questions of dispute, I believe the scale would be held intact by the workmen—well, I believe by the majority of employers.

4546. Are the prices ascertained quarterly?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale.*

4547. And the ascertainment of price for one three months governs the wages for the next three months?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt.*

4548. Does the committee meet to consider in any way the result of the ascertainment or is the result sent out by the accountants and the wages determined according to an arithmetical computation?—The committee meet at the end of the period to receive the award from the accountants. There are two accountants, one on behalf of the employers and one on behalf of the workmen, and, as I say, the committee at the end of that period receive that award, and then the wages are arranged in accordance. There is no work for the committee to do

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

because, of course, there is a table made out for the governing of the wages which is printed and each member has a copy.

4549. Then with regard to the appointment of an umpire, you have found, I gather, great inconvenience and friction resulting sometimes in strikes from your not having an umpire?—Yes.

4550. From your not having somebody to whom the question may be referred, and who may settle it?—Yes; it has caused great unpleasantness very often, and great expense.

4551. Have you a chairman of the committee? We have a chairman and a vice-chairman, but neither the chairman nor the vice-chairman, with reference to voting powers, has any more power than any other individual of the committee—than any other private member.

Mr. *Dale.*

4552. Is the chairman chosen at each meeting or is he chosen annually?—Permanently—the chairman, and the vice-chairman. They were elected, if I remember rightly, when we established the scale in 1880, and no one has ever thought, I believe, of changing them.

4553. Are they both of them employers?—No.

4553*a*. Is one of them an employer and the other a representative of the men themselves?—One is an employer and the other is a member of the committee for the workmen.

Mr. *Burt.*

4554. You spoke in favour of the appointment of sub-inspectors from the ranks of the workmen?—Yes.

4555. Have there been appointed in Wales any sub-inspectors of that character?—Appointed by the Government do you mean?

4556. Yes?—No, not that I know of.

4557. Would you insist still upon an examination as to competency in the case of a man appointed from the ranks of the workmen to be an inspector?—Well, I should not like, of course, for any person off-hand to be appointed as an inspector without a guarantee that he was capable in some way or another.

4558. Would you have him examined as to his competency?—Perhaps not to the same extent as the present inspectors are examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

4559. Do you think that he ought to pass an examination equal to that which would secure a first class certificate?—A first class manager's certificate?

4560. Yes?—No, I do not think that.

4561. Would there not in that case be a lack of power on his part, that is to say, would he not in that case be inspecting the administration of somebody who held an actual certificate of competence greater than his own?—I think not.

Mr. *Trow.*

4562. Let us go back to this dispute that took place, because I take a great interest in it. You state that the men gave notice because the rates of wages were lower than the district?—Yes.

4563. Were these lower rates in existence at the time the scale was adopted?—I suppose they would be.

4564. Were these men's wages governed by the scale from its formation to the time they gave notice?—The advances or reductions that they would receive upon the standard rate of wages paid were governed by the sliding scale, but the sliding scale committee had no power of fixing their standard rate.

4565. Had there been any change in the mode of working at this special colliery?—Not before the workmen gave notice.

4566. And the contention of the employers was that the action of these men in giving notice was a violation of the conditions of the scale?—That was their contention.

4567. Is there not a provision laid down in the scale that during its continuance there shall be no alteration in the rates of wages existing at the time of its adoption unless there is an alteration in the mode of work?—No.

4568. Then there should be. It is the only scale I ever heard of which had not it?—That is another thing.

4569. There is?—No.

4570. The Chairman of the Board says there is, I think?—No; there is a clause to this effect, that the standard rate of wages upon which future advances and reductions shall be made shall be the actual rate of wages paid in 1879.

4571. And that no alteration shall take place in the rate of wages paid to any workman governed by the scale except there is an alteration in the mode of working, and the claim on account of the alteration is submitted to the sliding scale committee?—I have given you the full clause, but the addition that you put now is not in that clause, if you will pardon me.

4572. The chairman says it is?—No, he does not, I think.

4573. Then after the men struck the matter was submitted to the joint committee—the sliding scale committee—but the employers laid it down as a condition that the men should resume work before it was inquired into?—Before the gentleman appointed should undertake to deal with the question.

4574. Is not that the condition in connexion with every arbitration?—We have nothing to complain of in that.

4575. You see, you cannot fight and arbitrate. The employer says, you cannot keep your men out and the committee arbitrate; go to work, we will deal with it——

Mr. *Abraham.*

I object to Mr. Trow giving evidence.

Mr. *Dale.*

It must be put as much as possible in the form of a question.

The *Witness.*

The men did return to work.

Mr. *Trow.*

4576. Now let us go to your umpire?—We have no one.

4577. Mr. Fowler made reference to the conditions that govern the Wages Board in the Midlands. Would you accept the same conditions that govern in the Midlands?—I do not know what those conditions are.

4578. They have a chairman and a vice-chairman of the board, they have a permanent president, who is elected; and when the committee fail to agree, the chairman and the vice-chairman having no casting vote, they call upon the president to act for them?—There may be something else in existence which I am quite ignorant of, and I should not like to commit myself to anything, or to say that I would accept their terms without knowing exactly what their terms are.

4579. Would you accept it on the same terms as our board?—I do not know what the terms of your board are.

4580. We have a chairman and a vice-chairman the same as you have. I only want to see how you will have your board governed. Would it be on our principle—that is, that independent of the chairman and the vice-chairman, we have a referee, and either party has power to call in the referee if they fail to agree, or, if necessary, to select someone independent of the referee?—I am quite satisfied with our own board at present, providing that an amendment could be made in the way of appointing an umpire. We have no fault to find, as I said before, with the form of regulating our wages.

4581. But should he be elected permanently, so to speak, when not required, or would you elect him occasionally when you did require him?—It is immaterial to me which.

4582. You referred to the hours of working. You say they are nine hours from bank to bank?—Yes, the recognised rule.

4583. And you think they should be eight?—I do.

4584. Were you here when Mr. Morgan was here?—I was.

4585. And you heard him declare that they should be nine hours from bank to bank?—Yes, I heard him make many remarks.

4586. He said here he thought it would be hard upon the employers to have eight hours from bank to bank?—Yes.

4587. Then you disagree with him?—I am not here to fall in with everything that any other witness may say. I am only giving evidence upon my own hook, which I believe in.

4588. I do not say you are, but I say you disagree with Mr. Morgan?—If you say that is disagreeing, put it down as so.

4589. You have nine hours; Mr. Morgan says it should be so; therefore, if you do not disagree you have no case?—I am giving evidence for my own district, and not for Mr. Morgan's district.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

4590. Assuming that you had an umpire, would your men submit the question of hours to an umpire or rather ask Parliament to deal with it?—You see our desire is that the question should be settled by legislation.

4591. In reply to Mr. Burt, I think you said that if a man could do his stint he should not be down the pit eight hours?—I do not think I mentioned the word "stint."

4592. You did not say "stint." I put the word in, but you said that if he could do his work in a less time he should not be compelled to work longer?—If circumstances permitted. Sometimes we have what we call stiff coal, but at other times we have what we call the easy coal, and a man who is employed merely at the face cutting his coal if he can cut the necessary quantity and then leave without interfering with the production or the output of coal in any way, in cases of that sort I say that as a rule men are not interfered with.

4593. But if it is a legislative eight hours, do you not think that the employer would have the right to demand that the man should stop down eight hours, and that it should not be piece-work?—What would the man be the better for stopping down eight hours.

4594. I do not know what better he would be. If a man has a hard place which would take him 8½ hours to do his days' work in, you would not allow that one man to stop in the half hour extra to make his wages up equal to the other man's?—Certainly not.

4595. He shall work as short as he likes, but he shall not work a minute over eight hours whether he earns the same pay or not?—Not over eight hours.

4596. I must ask you this question which I have asked the rest. Do you not think there is a danger if you ask Parliament to deal with the hours that the employers will ask Parliament to deal with the wages?—No, I do not. I think there is no necessity for going to Parliament to regulate wages.

4597. You see that is not for our side to judge, would they have the right to do it?—I say no.

Mr. Abraham.

4598. In your opinion, and within your experience, though the sliding scale is still imperfect, is it the most perfect scheme for regulating wages that you have seen?—I believe it is the best scheme, and I believe it is the fairest for both employers and *employés.*

4599. What was it that first brought the sliding scale into existence in the South Wales coal-field?—I believe it was the great strike of 1875.

4600. The sliding scale arrangement is the result of the great strike of 1875?—Yes.

4601. Do you remember the basis of that scale?—I think I do.

4602. Will you kindly give them to the committee?—If I remember rightly, I think there were three groups, one was called the

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

made an appeal to the workmen for a reduction despite the arrangement of the sliding scale, the workmen having refused the colliery has been idle since, I believe, the 1st of July last.

4635. Was the case brought before the Sliding Scale Committee?—Yes.

4636. And a decision in favour of the men given?—Well, the decision could not be given otherwise, but the employers said that the owners had a perfect right to stop their colliery if they thought the colliery did not pay them.

4637. But they did not see their way clear to re-start the collieries, though the Sliding Scale Committee had decided as to wages in favour of the men?—Exactly.

4638. Supposing then that the workmen on the other hand refused to carry out the joint recommendation and decision of the Sliding Scale Committee, would you in that case prevent other men going to work at that colliery?—I do not understand that question, let me have it again, please.

4639. Supposing that the workmen, in the case where the joint decision and recommendation of the Sliding Scale Committee had been in favour of the employer, refused to resume operations, would you then prevent other workmen going there to carry out the recommendations of the Sliding Scale Committee?—If we agreed to bring the question before the Sliding Scale Committee and accept their decision the rules of our Association bind us to accept that decision whatever it may be, either for us or against us.

4640. So that in your case, according to your rules, your men would be compelled to accept the decision of the Sliding Scale Committee?—They would be either compelled to accept the decision of the Sliding Scale Committee, or the colliery would be thrown open for other workmen.

4641. So, in your case, the umpire asked for would settle the disputes that we now have occasionally arising?—Yes.

4642. Though all the collieries in Monmouthshire and South Wales are not collieries in the Employers' Association, still the wages thereat are governed by the decisions of the Sliding Scale Committee?—Yes. As I said, we have 42 collieries in our own district, comparatively small collieries, and all the local agreements that we have with those collieries are based upon the regulations of the Sliding Scale Committee. Whatever advances or reductions take place at the coal owner's associated collieries take place in the other collieries outside the pale of the Coal Owner's Association.

4643. As to wages, what, comparatively speaking, is the position of your men at the present time as compared with the position of other miners in other districts in this country?—The wages of our people in our district would be, before we had the last audit, which brought us a reduction of $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. as a district rate, 4*s.* 2*d.*, plus $57\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., now it would be $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. less.

4644. Is that below or above other districts in Monmouthshire and South Wales?—If the rates

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

of the other districts are in accordance with the report that I have had from some of the members, it would be below the average rate, I think, of the steam coal district.

4645. Do you know in your experience of any other period in which it can be said that the miners of South Wales have obtained similar, not to say better, wages than the miners of the north of England?—I do not happen to know what may be the rates of the miners in the north of England at present—not directly.

4646. By report?—By report I have heard that it was 3*s.*

4647. Though the hours worked by the miners in the north of England have been less than they have been with us, still you have reasons to believe that their wages have been higher?—They have been higher in times gone by.

4648. With respect to the question of enforcing the settlement of the hours question, you will remember the efforts made when we re-arranged the last Sliding Scale Committee with respect to this question?—Yes.

4649. Could you think it possible for any body of representatives to press this question further upon the employers' representatives than was done then by the representatives of the workmen in Monmouthshire and South Wales?—I think we went as far then as we could, until we had a blank denial from the employers; they said, no, we will not deal with the question. We accepted that as a definite answer on more than one occasion.

4650. Were you not of opinion when that notice was given that it meant, if we enforced it, a general strike as a consequence?—That was my opinion, that it must lead to a strike.

4651. That was your opinion?—That was my opinion.

4652. Then being in such unfavourable circumstances, as we happened to be at that moment, do you think it would have been possible for us to carry our point?—I think it would have been folly to have resorted to a strike.

4653. As to the result, do you think it would have been possible for us to win the day?—Well, it might have been possible for us to have won the day for the time, but the question is where would be the power in times of depression for us to keep it, or to maintain the eight hours unless secured by legislation.

4654. Even at that time, was it not the opinion of the great majority of the representatives that we would not carry it even then?—We would not carry it, that is my opinion without a strike.

4655. Even with a strike?—Well, I do not know how far that would go; I am not sure that I should like to say that we would not have carried it with a strike, providing that we struck long enough.

4656. That is a qualification. How many workmen in and about the collieries, directly and indirectly, have their wages governed by the Sliding Scale Committee?—Speaking for South Wales and Monmouthshire generally.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

4657. Yes, altogether?—I think it would surely number from 85,000 to 95,000.

4658. Not 100,000, would you think?—Well, I would not be surprised to find that it is 100,000 people; but I thought to be safe and within the lines in saying from 85,000 to 95,000.

4659. We do not want to exaggerate. With those 100,000 people on our hands, would you think it possible for us to enforce upon the employers the reduction of the hours by a strike?—It would have been folly to attempt it, and I think it would have been cruel. I must say that I think it would have been cruel on our part if we had then drawn out on strike some 100,000 people in such times as we had then.

4660. Then with respect to the black list, your case is not where the employers exercise their right to refuse to employ the men who have been on strike?—No.

4661. But it had reference to their being refused to continue working at other collieries where those men were being employed?—Yes.

4662. Where you have reason to know that their names have been sent to their present employer, and a request made that they should be stopped?—Yes.

4663. Is that the case of your grievance?—Yes.

4664. Would you make that criminal?—Well, I would.

4665. Referring again to the question of hours, did you attend that conference which was held in Edinburgh in the year 1887?—I attended several conferences held at Manchester and elsewhere, and one at Edinburgh, I think it was about the date that you refer to.

4666. Do you remember who represented South Wales then?—I remember that you were there for one; I was there for another; and I am not sure whether it was Mr. Morgan, of Aberdare, who was there, or who it was from Aberdare; I believe it was Mr. Morgan, if I remember rightly.

4667. Can you tax your memory now, and see whether you cannot say for certain that it was Mr. David Morgan?—I would not like to be certain as to whether it was Mr. Morgan or not; but I believe it was he. I would not go further than that, and I would not like to say definitely that it was.

4668. I will not press you further upon the subject. Then, with regard to inspection, you have no complaints to make, I think, with respect to the work done by our present inspectors?—No.

4669. But you have to complain of their inadequacy to do the work?—Quite so.

4670. Do you remember the extent of the district that those men have to inspect?—They have to inspect collieries in Breconshire, Glamorganshire, Carmarthenshire, and a part of Pembrokeshire.

4671. Practically they have the whole of what is commonly called South Wales?—Yes.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

4672. Then it will take them some considerable time to get to the collieries from where they live?—Yes, Mr. Gray lives at Neath, Mr. Robson lives at Swansea, and the late Mr. Randle used to live at Penarth, but I do not know exactly where Mr. Sims lives.

Sir *William Lewis.*

4673. At Cardiff?—Thank you.

Mr. *Abraham.*

4674. Taking the collieries of our own district, could either of those gentlemen, efficient as they are, make a thorough inspection of every one of them in one day?—Oh, dear me, no.

4675. Not the collieries in your district?—There are some collieries in our district where it would be impossible to inspect the whole of them in one day.

4676. Would it take them two days?—Yes, with some of the collieries: but that would be with very few of the collieries, because very few in our district are so large as that.

4677. Take collieries that you know in other districts; between the time that it takes to travel from where the inspectors reside to the collieries and the time necessary to examine them, how many days do you think it would require one of those gentlemen to examine some of our large collieries in the hilly parts of South Wales?—At least three days, and then he would have all his work cut out.

4678. In addition to which, either of those gentlemen has to attend all inquests in his district?—Yes; and not only have they to inspect the interior of the colliery, but they have to inspect the machinery also, the pit-head gear, and so forth.

4679. Then they have to give information occasionally before the Board of Trade?—Yes.

4680. Occasionally they have to come up here to London?—Yes.

4681. As to the class of inspectors, do you wish to have an addition to the staff of inspectors selected from another class of people?—Yes, from the practical miners.

4682. What are your reasons for that?—Because I believe this, that the practical miner knows more of the exact working of the collieries, with all due respect now to the other gentlemen. Miners have a greater practical knowledge of the working of the colliery, and they would examine more minutely. Besides that, they come in closer contact with the workmen, and they would be from time to time, perhaps, in a better position to receive reports direct from the workmen than the inspectors are at present; they mix up with them, and associate more with them.

Sir *William Lewis.*

4683. I have not yet been able to understand from what class you propose drawing the additional inspectors?—From the mining class; from the miners themselves, practical workmen.

4684. Who have had no experience except of actually getting the coal?—As I have already

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

said I should not wish to appoint any person who would not in any way give satisfaction to the parties who would have the power of appointing him; but still I should not think that there would be any real necessity for asking a practical miner to go through an examination anything similar to that for a first-class manager's certificate.

4685. You do not think there would be any necessity for that?—I do not think there would be a real necessity for going to that extent.

4686. So you would propose putting a practical miner in a position superior to that of a manager who has had to pass an examination, and who is also responsible for the safety of the conduct of the colliery?—I think that if a person could be examined to the extent of a second-class certificate, that would be quite sufficient.

4687. So that again, I suggest for your consideration, that you would put a man who has passed an examination for a second-class certificate in a superior position to a man who has passed and obtained a certificate of the first-class?—No, I would not.

4688. And who, in addition to that, is also responsible for the safety of the conduct of the mine?—No, I would not put him in a superior position.

4689. What would he do then?—I would put him in such a position that he would be there as an inspector, and, as I said before, for the simple reason that such a person would come in closer contact with the workmen; he would be more associated with them, and, as a matter of fact, the workmen would be more ready to make their requests known to this person, because he was in association with them directly or indirectly, than they would to a person who had been brought up, perhaps, in a higher sphere.

4690. What would you do in case of conflict of opinion between your new inspector and the manager of the mine; who is to prevail?—Well, we should submit it then to the chief inspector.

4691. It would be a question of appeal to the chief inspector?—Yes.

4692. Are you aware that all the present inspectors have to prove that they have had practical experience for a certain number of years, and that they, I think, without any exception, have all of them held positions of trust in connexion with colliery operations?—I would not dispute that for a moment.

4693. You do not suggest that the present inspectors do not possess the practical experience that you are seeking to have in the new inspectors?—I do not think that many of them possess what we consider practical knowledge, that is to say, have been practical workmen.

4694. They have not cut coal with their hands?—They have not cut coal, or perhaps they have not set timber, or they have not done many other things that the practical workman has to do. It is possible that they may have been brought up as officials, such as overmen, and attained a position of manager with a first-class certificate, or what not. I do not mean to say for a moment that they do not possess the necessary qualifications.

4695. In what way do you consider that such appointments as you suggest would be an advantage over the arrangement which has for some years now existed by which the men are enabled to make their own examination from time to time?—The men do make their own examinations, it is true, from time to time, but, as we know, many of them are not in a position to make a true report.

4696. Why?—Because of the results that follow. Some of them make their reports quite true and quite reliable, whereas we know other parties again are in a dread with reference to making their reports.

4697. Will you give to the Commission a single instance where a man has been made to suffer for reporting truly the result of his inspection?—Well, I should be very sorry to go direct to that point, and to give a single instance to point out any person, but we have those complaints brought to our associations from time to time that people have been victimised for making a true and real report of the manner in which they find the place deficient.

4698. But you are not prepared to give a single instance?—No, I would not.

4699. Practically, it is a general statement?—I make this general statement, but I would not give any particular case.

4700. To what extent do the men in your district avail themselves of that power?—Many of them in many of the collieries carry that rule out, and they make the monthly inspections, but there are other collieries which do not carry out those monthly inspections.

4701. Do you consider it necessary to have any further inspection where that power is being carried out by the workmen?—Do you see, supposing that the workmen make those monthly inspections, and they see that there is a necessity for repairs or anything of that, or find out perhaps a defect in the ventilation, it is possible that the overman or the manager or the under-manager, as the case may be, may ignore the report of these workmen's inspectors.

4702. Again I ask you for a single illustration within your own knowledge?—Then I say I do not feel inclined to give a single case here to-day. I think it would be dangerous.

4703. Do you not know as a fact that these reports are, as a rule, placed in a prominent position at the top of the pit, and that the attention of the men is called to them?—No; in many cases they are not placed at the top of the pit—in dozens of cases.

4704. Then they are exceptionally?—I could go further than that, and say in scores of cases they are not placed at the pit top.

4705. The report is recorded in writing in a report book?—Supposed to be.

4706. But is it or is it not?—I say in some places it is, but in other places it is not.

4707. Now, with respect to your opinion as to the insufficiency of inspection, have you had sufficient experience of inspection of the whole

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

of the collieries of the district to be able to give the Commission any idea of the time necessary?—Well, I have had a great deal of experience. I have been in some of the largest and I have been through some of the smallest collieries, and, moreover, I say that I have had an experience of 32 years as a practical miner, working in many large collieries and in small colleries.

4708. In what large collieries were you working?—I worked at one time in the Abercarne Colliery. I think that is one of the most extensive that we had then in South Wales.

4709. Then?—Then.

4710. Yes, but I say now—where else have you worked in extensive collieries?—I worked at Llwympia, in the Rhondda Valley.

4711. When was that?—Many years ago.

4712. When it was opening out?—Yes, it was opening out, but it had opened you see.

4713. And what other extensive colliery have you worked in?—I have worked in the largest of the collieries in the western district.

4714-5. Yes, but they are not large in the sense of being large for the whole of the South Wales district?—Not in the west; but I think the Llwympia and the Abercarne Collieries will stand comparison.

4716 Those are the largest collieries you know of?—Yes.

4717. Now, applying the experience that you had there, you give it us as your opinion that there are insufficient inspectors?—Yes.

4718. Suppose the inspectors who have from time to time examined these various collieries differed from you, what would you say then—would you take them as being a better authority than you on such a subject?—Well, I should like to ask them in the first place about their inspection. I should like to analyse their inspection before I should take it as granted that the time that was allotted by them was sufficient.

4719. Then you would not assume that they were capable of judging upon that as well as you?—I should say that they were capable of judging, but it is possible that although they may be capable of judging they may come to a wrong judgment.

4720. Do you mean to say wrong in the sense that they would do so contrary to their belief or what?—Well, you may put it in that way if you like.

4721. You do not question their experience or ability?—No, not in the least.

4722. Still, if their judgment was different from yours, they would be wrong and you would be right?—I should prefer my own judgment, certainly.

4723. Notwithstanding your limited experience. Is Morfa Colliery in your district?—Yes

4724. You spoke of unionists and non unionists there, I think?—Yes.

4725. Do you happen to be aware of a resolution which has been arrived at recently by the Morfa men declining to continue working with the non-unionists?—Yes.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

4726. When was that?—Very recently.

4727. What was the effect of that resolution?—Well, the unionists, were the majority, and they requested the other people to fall in with their views. Some of them have refused, but no steps have yet been taken to compel them. Work has not ceased: the men have not declined to ride up and down with them, neither have they refused to work in the same colliery.

4728. Has the following resolution been suspended, then? With the permission of the chairman I will read it: "At a meeting held on "Saturday evening, November 7th, 1891, the "following resolution was unanimously agreed "to:—That there should be a deputation "formed to wait upon Mr. Thomas Barrass and "also Mr. Gray, if required, to inform them "what we intend doing with non-union men "and those that are out of compliance, pro-"viding they do not clear up all their dues on "Saturday evening next, November 14th, 1891: "We, as federated men, shall tender in our "notice on the following Tuesday, November "17th, 1891, to cease work in one week from "that date, as we have come to the conclusion "that it is either they or us is going to work"?—I have not seen the resolution, but of course the resolution has been reported to me as having been passed.

4729. Would you consider that consistent with the sliding scale agreement?—Well, I should say that that resolution has not been carried out.

4730. I am asking you whether, if the resolution was carried out, it is consistent with the sliding scale agreement?—I do not know that there is anything in the sliding scale agreement touching upon that point.

4731. There is nothing in the sliding scale agreement, is there, to require men to go on working together without reference to their being unionists or non-unionists?—Nothing whatever.

4732. Nothing?—No.

4733. You do not so construe the agreement?—I do not know of a single clause in the agreement where anything is mentioned with reference to the unionists or non-unionists working together or not working together.

4734. Then would you support the converse—that, assuming the non-unionists were in the majority, they should pass a resolution declining to go on working with unionists?—Well, I think that is pressing the question rather too far.

4735. I am asking the question; it is for you to answer it?—I think I must decline to answer that question.

4736. You decline to answer that question?—Yes.

4737. Now, with respect to the number of hours per day, have you taken the trouble to acquaint yourself as to the number of hours worked at all the collieries in your district?—Well, we have had a report——

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

4738. Whose report?—We have had the workmen's report from the majority of the collieries in our Association.

4739. You have not visited the collieries to ascertain whether what you stated in your evidence in chief, namely, nine hours per day from bank to bank, is the number of hours worked in that district?—I say the recognised hours.

4740. Yes, but what are the hours actually worked?—As I said before, there are many of the collieries where they wind the full nine hours, but there are also many of the collieries which do not wind the full nine hours; that is, they have not, as we may say, a continual winding from 7 o'clock in the morning till 4 o'clock or half-past 4 in the afternoon.

4741. Do you not know of many collieries where the men do not work eight hours a day in your district?—No. As cutters do you mean?

4742. Yes?—Well, as I said before, it is possible that there are cases where the cutters are cutters of coal only, and lads fill and cart the coal away from them, and that all the cutters would be finished in 7 hours or 7½ hours or 8 hours.

4743. What do you propose doing with them, assuming that your proposition of eight hours is carried out?—I propose doing nothing with them.

4744. They are to be left as they are?—What could be done.

4745. It is for you to say. I wish to have your answer?—Well, I do not see what reason there would be for keeping those men in the pit, if so be, as I said before, circumstances in the seam permitted them to turn out their quantity of coal which would necessitate the lads who do the tramming and carting and filling to be in the pit for the full eight hours. I do not see what necessity there would be to compel those men to remain in for an unnecessary period if by their coming out the output of the colliery or the winding operations were not interfered with.

4746. Assuming that I am a collier, and that I am only working seven hours a day at present, and that some of my neighbours or marrows think proper to work 8½ hours or 9 hours, does your suggestion involve reducing them down to eight, and increasing me up to eight hours, or am I to be left alone to do as I like with seven hours?—What I mean is eight hours from bank to bank, and I do not think that we are going to interfere with what the officials of the colliery will do with those parties who do not work the eight hours. I think that that is a point which should be left to them.

4747. To the officials?—Yes, to the officials.

4748. And failing agreement between the officials and the workmen, what?—Well——

4749. Are the officials to have the control up to that extent?—To what extent?

4750. To the extent of requiring eight hours' work from every man in the place?—We say eight hours, and we do not say less than eight hours.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

4751. Do you intend requiring every man to work eight hours for each day of the week?—It is possible that he would not be required to work his eight hours.

4752. No, but assuming there is plenty of work, is it part of your scheme that 48 hours per week shall be worked by each man, assuming eight hours per day is carried out?—Not 48 hours of actual labour, because it would not be more than eight hours from bank to bank. What we say is eight hours from bank to bank, and not 48 hours' actual labour.

4753. I only want to understand your scheme. I will take it that every man has to go down at a particular time, and that he has to remain down and come up in eight hours from the time he goes down, and that he has to do so every day in the week. Is that what you mean?—Well, we should not expect to blow hot and cold upon the question. If we adopt the principle of eight hours we mean eight hours from bank to bank.

4754. Then you require 48 hours per week?—We say 48 hours per week from bank to bank.

4755. Possibly you may have considered what would be the effect upon the cost of carrying on the collieries of reducing all the men to eight hours?—No, I have not considered the effect upon the cost.

4756. That is a matter of indifference?—Well, I leave that again for the other side, you know.

4757. So that if the other side should find that it would involve them in increased cost in getting their coal you would not expect them to agree to the eight hours; is that it?—I would expect them to agree to the eight hours, because I do not see for my own part how it would increase the cost of production.

4758. You, as a practical man, say that as your deliberate opinion?—I do.

4759. So that reducing the get of a colliery does not necessarily increase the cost?—I do not see that it does, because I remember when I first started work in the pit we used to work then for 10 and for 11 and even for 12 hours. I have been there as much as 15 hours for the same day, for the same shift, and I do not think that the cost of production has been increased by the reducing of the hours in 1872 from what they were previously to that.

4760. Are you speaking now with any knowledge at all of the cost of any colliery where you were working 14 or 15 hours a day, and the same colliery under similar circumstances at your present hours?—I know this for a fact, that during those long hours I do not know of any pits which were winding the quantities of coal when those hours were worked by the men themselves as they wind at present.

4761. Do you suggest then that you worked less when remaining in the pit 13 or 14 hours than you have since when you have been working nine hours; is that it?—I say that we work less hours——

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

4762. Less quantity I am talking about?— I believe the general output has been increased since the reduction of the hours from 1872.

4763. Have you taken the trouble to inform yourself upon that particular point, or is that guess?—It is an opinion.

4764. That is your opinion?—That is my opinion.

4765. Without informing yourself?—Yes.

4766. So that if the colliery owners could prove that the cost of production would be greatly increased by reducing the number of hours you would not insist upon it?—I would insist upon it.

4766A. Still?—I would.

4766B. Then you would insist upon it to the extent of interfering with their competitive power with other collieries supplying coal say, to the same market?—What I say is this, that I would insist upon eight hours being adopted all through the coal-fields of Great Britain.

4767. Whether a section of the workmen or a large section of the workmen liked it or not you would enforce it?—I would enforce it.

4768. Now take your friend, Mr. David Morgan, is his opinion or yours to prevail?—Well, I cannot say, I should like to have my opinion to prevail.

4769. You would like your way?—Yes.

4770. Mr. Morgan would like his?—I dare say he would.

4771. Somebody else would like some other way?—It is possible.

4772. And regardless of consequences, you think eight hours must be the time which pitmen in the future are to work?—I believe so.

4773. You come from a district where the cost of coal is a very important factor in carrying on manufactures—the great tinplate works for instance?—Yes.

4774. If the increased cost of the coal necessitated the owners demanding an increased price, and that had the effect of closing a number of the tinplate works, would you force it to that conclusion?—Well, I say their is a necessity for the adoption of the eight hours principle in order to give the workmen the privilege of improving their position.

4775. Improving it in what way?—Socially, and in every other way that it could be improved.

4776. Then would you be prepared to adopt the double shift of Northumberland and Durham, assuming that the eight hours were established?—No, I would not.

4777. So you want the eight hours without the double shift?—Yes, single shift.

4778. In giving an answer to some questions of Mr. Fowler's, I believe you compared the earnings of the workmen in the north with those of the workmen in the south, but I think you did say that you only spoke upon newspaper report?—I did not say newspaper report.

4779. Well, upon reports then?—Yes.

4780. You have not been to the north to acquaint yourself as to the difference between

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

working double shift in the north and working a single shift in the south?—No, I have not.

4781. I suppose you will admit that working two shifts is not an unnatural thing in our district?—There are many collieries which are working the double shift, but it is a system which we disagree with.

4782. What are the tinplate works working?—The tinplate works work the double shift.

4783. What do the iron and steel works do?—I am referring now chiefly to the collieries.

4784. Yes, but I am asking you upon labour questions generally; how are they in your district?—The steel works work the two shifts and the copper works work the two shifts.

4785. In fact, all the works in your district, except collieries, work the double shift?—The steel works, the tinplate works, and the copper works work double shift because that does not interfere with the ventilation of those manufactories, but I do consider that the double shift system would interfere with the ventilation or the atmosphere of the collieries.

4786. Then do you suggest that the collieries of Northumberland and Durham are not as well ventilated as the collieries in South Wales?—I do not know anything about the collieries in Northumberland and Durham; I have never worked in Northumberland and Durham.

4787. You are giving your opinion without a knowledge of the effect of the double shift then?—I am giving my opinion as from the opinion that I have with reference to the double shift in our own district in our own collieries—it is my candid opinion.

4788. What experience have you had of the double shift?—I have worked double shift in our own collieries.

4789. And what was the effect?—The effect was this: that we were thoroughly convinced that the mine had not sufficient time to cool between the shifts, and we say that if there was one shift adopted and a few hours from that shift of cutting coal and winning coal to the time that the repairers and other hands would go into the mine, they can work their eight hours, and then let the other eight hours be given for the cooling of the mine.

4790. You do not think that it is possible to meet that by increased ventilating current?—No, I do not.

4791. Has it occurred to you that when working double shift a very much smaller number of men are exposed to the risk of accident at one time than when working single shift?—I think quite the reverse, particularly working on coal. I think the men are exposed to greater dangers in working double shifts on coal.

4792. I asked you as to the number of men exposed to the risk of accident by the single shift or double shift?—I hardly understand your question then.

4793. Take a colliery working 1,000 tons a day single shift; as a rule you have a man for each ton?—Yes.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

4794. Then take a colliery working 1,000 tons a day by double shift, you would have a little more than 500 men in the same mine at one time. So that the risk of accident by single shift is practically double what it is by double shift?—I do not see how that could be said, because if you have 500 men working the day shift, and 500 men working the night shift, you have the same number of hands employed for the same output of coal.

4795. Risk of accident at one given time?—Certainly the risk of accident for 500 men must be less than the risk of accident for 1,000 men.

4796. The risk of accident at any given time?—Well, you see by the number of hands employed, if you are referring now to 1,000 hands employed, there must be more working places open, therefore the risk of accident at a given time—we will say at the day shift, where 500 hands are employed—would naturally be less than the risk of accident where 1,000 hands are employed at the same hour.

4797. That is all. You referred to the number of strikes which have taken place in South Wales during the last two years, I think?—No, in our own district; I confined myself to that.

4798. In your own district?—Yes.

4799. I limit it to your own district then. Can you tell the Commission whether they have increased or decreased of late?—I daresay that they have increased the last two years.

4800. Notwithstanding improved wages?—Notwithstanding improved wages.

4801. Could you tell us, so far as you remember, what have been the causes of the greater number of these petty strikes?—Yes, I could. There are many collieries; we have 42 as I gave the numbers this morning, not in the Association; that is, not in the Coalowners' Association. Until recently these collieries were outside our Association. When they joined our Association they went in then for an advance of wages, or as we may say a request to be made up to the discrict rate. Many of the colliery owners, who had not hitherto been governed by the principle of the sliding scale, refused.

4802. So that your answer embraced not only collieries within the Association, and which are not in the scale or under the Sliding Scale Committee, but also collieries outside the Association?—Yes.

4803. Now, would you mind limiting your answer to collieries within the Sliding Scale Committee?—As to the number of strikes?

4804. Yes?—I do not think that they have increased much for the last two years; but if anything I must say that they have been on the increase.

4805. Mr. Isaac Evans is the agent in that district, and he has to do with the whole of these disputes has he not?—Well, yes.

4806. So he is capable of ascertaining from what cause these strikes occurred. I am asking you again what was the cause of the petty strikes in connection with collieries within the Sliding Scale Committee?—As I said this morning the cause of the one strike that I referred to was that the men sought to be paid the acknowledged district rate, and the employers refused; on the other hand the workmen at another colliery requested to be paid in accordance with the sliding scale agreement, and the employers in that case refused.

4807. I will take them one after the other, if you please. We will deal first of all with the one you mentioned first. In asking for payment according to the district rate, was that not an attempt to set aside the basis of the arrangement—the agreement now in force?—I think not, because there is this fact about it: when the last arrangement was going under a revision, or, as we may say, if you like, going under alteration, an attempt was made, and a request was made, to the employers that this colliery should then be levelled up to the district rate; but notwithstanding that, we must admit that the sliding scale agreement was signed by both parties, still keeping in view that this particular colliery, or these particular collieries, under that firm were paid below the district rate.

4808. Did you or did you not sign the agreement?—Yes.

4809. On behalf of those men, having had the matter discussed, and a conclusion arrived at that they could not be dealt with differently from other men?—I would not go so far as to say that it was conclusive that they should not be dealt with.

4810. Then your signature to an agreement must not be regarded as conclusive for those you represent?—Yes, my signature to an agreement must be regarded as conclusive, but still at the same time there was this about it, the request having been made by these collieries, that they should be levelled up to the district rate, those workmen kept that in view continually.

4811. They accepted the agreement, accepted all the advances they were entitled to under the agreement for, I suppose, 11 months, and then they made a claim which was brought before the Sliding Scale Committee, and with the exception of some few of the men's representatives they decided that it was a distinct violation of the sliding scale agreement?—I do not know that the workmen's representatives decided that it was a distinct violation, otherwise where would have been the consistency of the workmen's representative taking up the question to decide on their behalf?

4812. You took it up?—Yes.

4813. Now, upon the question of the repudiation of agreements following up the same point, have the men ever repudiated any arrangement that you have come to?—Let me see. I would not like to say they had not.

4814. Then passing on to the question of the umpire?—I should like to say this also, that the employers have done the same thing.

4815. I am asking what they have done with you; it is another thing how they treated the employers?—I mean the employers where a gentleman has been appointed on behalf of the

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

employers to deal with the question with me, have directly refused to carry out that agreement afterwards.

4816. Yes; but did the workmen or not repudiate an arrangement that you had committe l them to?—I do not remember it now.

4817. Then as to the umpire—have you made any inquiry as to the effect of the existence of an umpire for the purpose of settling these disputes in the north of England?—No, I do not know that I have made any direct inquiry.

4818. You have not ascertained that where there is an umpire there are a far greater number of disputes than where there is no umpire in existence?—Well, a dispute may mean a dispute arising between the employers and the employed, but the question is whether that dispute would lead to a strike.

4819. Do you think that the existence of a standing arbitrator or umpire in your district would or would not be an incentive to miners' agents and others to create disputes?—I do not think it would.

4820. You do not?—No, I do not think it would, because there would be this about it, if I may say so, that before any question of dispute could be referred to an arbitrator the question would have to be thoroughly dealt with by the Joint Committee, and if the Joint Committee would say, Well, it is a question that cannot be decided here, and must be referred to an umpire, certainly the question would have to go; but supposing, for instance, we would say that a question of dispute arose in my own district, I being a member of that Sliding Scale Committee, should have to have the opinion of the other members of that committee for our side—workmen's representatives—and if they were to say to me, "Now, Evans, this is a violation of our "agreement, and this is a question which can- "not be referred to the Sliding Scale Committee, "we must decide as workmen's representatives "against you," I should have to fall in, and certainly so would the other miners' agents for the other districts in like manner.

4821. So you would be surprised if the experience of other people working similar properties was an increased number of disputes after the appointment of an umpire?—I should be surprised.

4822. Now as to enforcing the award of an umpire, how would you propose doing that?—There is this about it. Supposing, for instance, that a question of dispute cropped up, and both parties agreed to accept the decision of the umpire, the workmen, after receiving the decision of that umpire, will say, "No, we cannot accept this." Then the rules of our Association, as I said before, would permit the employers to open those collieries, and our Association would not and could not, under the present rules, support those men for refusing the carrying out of the award of the arbitrator.

4823. Do you not know as a fact that when a strike has occurred at any colliery no other men will go and work at that colliery, certainly no other men from that particular district?—

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

Under the present circumstances it is so, but I think it would materially help the employers, and we may say that public opinion would go to a certain extent against the workmen for refusing to carry out the agreement that they had agreed upon.

4824. Would you, in such a case, prevent those men having work at any other colliery?—No, I would not prevent them, I would not say it should be a matter of starvation to those men.

4825. How is it to be enforced then?—Well, I would say this: that the colliery would be open for other people, and I never saw a colliery yet that was open but what would receive before very long sufficient hands to carry on the colliery in a perfect manner.

4826. Have you ever known men to repudiate an award after solemnly agreeing to abide by a certain decision?—Yes; as I said before, both parties are guilty of the same offence.

4827. I am asking you about the workmen; you can give your answers afterwards with respect to the owners?—Oh yes, I have known it.

4828. What was done in that case?—I think the question was re-opened.

4829. Are you referring to the Cory-reo case where they went before the stipendiary magistrate Mr. De Rutzen?—I do not remember a case going from Cory-reo to Mr. De Rutzen.

4830. I have that case in my mind, it is only fair to tell you—you must have had some other colliery in your mind?—I do not remember that case of Cory-reo; was that from the Swansea district?

4831. Yes?—I never remember in my time since I have been agent of that district a case being referred to Mr. De Rutzen.

4832. You referred to the number of thin seams that are being worked in your district, I think?—Yes.

4833. Do they not cut top or bottom for height?—In some places they do, at other places again they of course cart the coal back to the shaft and fill on the main heading.

4834. Sufficient height for the tubs to go out?—Low carts.

4835. What proportion of the coal in your district would be embraced in that observation of yours?—A very small per-centage.

4836. Extremely small?—As I have said, we have about twelve small collieries in the district now working at a less thickness than 24 inches.

4837. Collieries working a very small output?—Yes, a comparatively small output varying from 40 to 60, and 80, perhaps up to 100 tons per day.

4838. Are you still of opinion that a suspension of operations at the collieries for one day a week would be a desirable thing?—Well, from our standpoint I am.

4839. Regardless of the question of cost again?—Regardless of the question of cost.

4840. Was that suggestion made by you in connexion with the eight hours, or independent of the eight hours?—Independent of the eight hours, because I see no likelihood of getting the eight hours passed just now.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

4841. Would you desire to have that suspension of operations every week in addition to the reduction of the time to eight hours?—If you would give us the eight hours now to start with I should be content with the eight hours for awhile.

4842. Then when you have the eight hours you will come down to seven, and ask for a couple of days a week off?—I do not know what we may come to, it is rather hard to say.

4843. You have not told us what the earnings of the men in your district are, except that you gave one general answer as to the district average. Perhaps you will tell the Commission how you have arrived at that average?—Very easily. We have a system in our district of the workmen cutting so many tons per day at such a price. As you are aware, the different seams vary in prices. We have some seams paying as low as 10*d.* per ton standard, plus the per-centages of the sliding scale. We have other seams again paying as much as 2*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.* 9*d.* per ton standard, plus the per-centages. It all depends upon the seam. Then we have a system of so much per day; we may say, if you like, stint work, so many tons per day or so many hundredweight per day for every collier, making up his average wage rate to 4*s.* 2*d.* per day, plus the per-centages. We do not say less, and there are many collieries exceeding that.

4844. What do you make that on the gross, the 4*s.* 2*d.* plus the 57½ per cent.?—I think it would work out near about to something like 6*s.* 6*d.* per day or 6*s.* 7*d.* per day; something near about that, 6*s.* 6¾*d.*

4845. Is that with reference to the number of days per week that they work?—That would be the average day's work.

4846. But is it the average per day worked, or is that the average for a week when they have only worked perhaps four days?—No; I say that is the average rate of the day's work, even if they work four days a week or six days a week; but as I said before there are many collieries that would exceed the weight. Supposing, for instance, if we consider the trams would carry 20 cwt. each, then at the filling, in order to secure the 20 cwt., a man may put 21, 21½, or 22, as the case may be, so that the extra weight would amount very often to an additional payment.

4847. Do you not think that you are very much under-estimating the earnings of the men in your district by giving such a statement as that?—No, I do not; that is taking the average, mind.

4848. Have you taken the trouble to go to any collieries and select, say, half a dozen or a dozen of the men who attend to their work as long as the colliery is at work, and ascertained their earnings?—I have been to some.

4849. With what result?—I have found that some of them have been as low as 5*s.* 3*d.* a day, and even for the last month.

4850. Yes, and as high as——?—We have taken the days that the colliery has worked, and we have taken the six months average for every day the colliery has worked—one particular colliery—and the wages did not exceed 5*s.* 8¾*d.* per day. Other collieries I visited and I found that they did come up to 7*s.* a day and 7*s.* 2*d.*

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

Mr. *Dale.*

4851. Was this while the same 57½ per cent. was in operation?—Including the 57½ per cent.

4852. Including when that was the per-centage?—Yes.

Sir *William Lewis.*

4853. Did you not find some making as much as 10*s.* 6*d.* to 11*s.* per day?—No, I have not found one.

4854. Not in one of the collieries you have visited for the purpose of getting information?—I have not found a single case in any single colliery.

4855. You said a great deal about a black list; are there any "black" collieries as well as black lists of workmen?—Well, they are all black.

4856. Collieries to be avoided when there is a dispute between the owner and the workmen?—Collieries to be avoided?

4857. Yes?—I hardly understand your meaning.

4858. Have you never heard it suggested that men should keep away from a particular colliery because there is a dispute there?—Oh, dear me, yes.

4859. Is not that a power that the men have, of practically shutting up a colliery as things now stand?—Well, do you see, I do not know that you can blame the colliers for that. They only follow the example of the employers.

4860. The colliers can take their employment from A's colliery to B's colliery, and if they do not like B, they can go on to C and through the whole letters of the alphabet, but the colliery owner is bound there by his pits, and he cannot move his capital?—Yes, but I think this, that the workman has only been following the example of the employers, the example as set down by them, and I do not think to-day that any employers can expect a kiss for a kick from a workman.

4861. Then your suggestion is, that the employers did that first then?—This is my suggestion.

4862. It is?—Yes; in fact I know of a case which took place something like 20 years ago, where a letter was sent out directly from the employers preventing the employment of workmen in other collieries when a strike took place.

4863. Do you know of any workmen who have got into collieries under assumed names?—It is possible.

4864. Is not that practice very often adopted?—I do not know that it is.

4865. Was not that adopted at the particular place where you said that the men were sent away, and was that not the reason why they

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

could not claim wages from the employer?—We never attempted to claim the wages.

4866. No, you did not?—But I think we could have claimed.

4867. You did not claim because the men had been employed under assumed names?—It could not have been at that colliery, because the overman and the manager at that particular colliery where these 30 men were stopped, were well acquainted with the men who were employed at the other colliery, knew them all personally and lived in the same neighbourhood as they did. Therefore those men could not have got work, they could not have got employment under an assumed name.

4868. You said truly, with reference to the various sliding scale agreements, that they were all improved, and all improved in the direction of further advantage to the workmen?—Yes.

4869. So that having regard to the selling price of the produce in the market, you are now getting higher wages than you have been getting since the establishment of the first sliding scale?—Yes, in accordance with the prices as realised.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

4870. You said, I think, that the only objection you had to the sliding scale agreement was the want of an independent umpire?—I say that with respect to the agreement. I quite agree with the principle of the sliding scale for regulating wages, and I consider that one black spot in the arrangement is the want of an umpire.

4871. How would you propose to appoint the umpire?—That both parties should be there as a Joint Committee.

4872. I mean how would you appoint the umpire?—Supposing for instance, that both parties met together, the employers might suggest a certain gentleman, we as the workmen's representatives should suggest a certain gentleman, and we should draw as to which of those gentlemen should be appointed.

4873. Then you would agree to leave it to lot?—Yes.

4874 Do you think all parties would agree to that?—I do.

4875. I only wanted to know how you thought it would be worked. I thought there might possibly be a difficulty as to the appointment of the umpire, but that would be your solution of the difficulty?—I do not think there would be any difficulty providing both parties would agree to appoint an umpire.

4876. That is just the point I wanted to know. Supposing there were a difficulty you would decide it by lot?—As to who the umpire should be?

4877. That is what I mean?—Yes.

4878. Only one other question as to inspection. I want to know whether there have been any strikes or labour difficulties in consequence of the inspectors not visiting the collieries more frequently than they do?—No, I do not think there have. I may say this for the inspectors,

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

that whenever a case has been brought before their notice they have always attended, and I think that they have never spared even summoning the colliery officials when cases necessitated that.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

4879. Are you in favour of a legal eight hours' day for all industries or only for the mining industry?—For the mining industry.

4880. Then I suppose you would base that demand upon certain special circumstances connected with the mining trade?—I do not know of any particular circumstances more than I have already referred to.

4881. Would you mind re-stating those circumstances?—I believe that an eight hours' day is essential for the miner, because I believe that eight hours is sufficient for any man to be underground for one shift.

4882. Do you mean that if he is underground for more than eight hours it seriously injures his health?—I should say that it does, more or less.

4883. Have you got any statistics to prove that?—No, but I think there is this about it: Some time ago, as I daresay you are aware, the Foresters' Society sent out a notice that all persons in connexion with Forestry working in mines should be requested to pay a higher subscription monthly than any other class of industry. I believe that the accidents we are subjected to from time to time are so numerous that if the hours were less, the accidents would be materially less. Besides that, I again say that the long hours in mines do interfere in my opinion with the ventilation of the colliery.

4884. But when you are trying to establish a claim to legislative interference which is not made on behalf of other trades, I think it is clear that you will have to establish a marked distinction between the mining industry and other industries. Now I ask you can you point to any statistics to show that the mining industry is much more unhealthy than any other industry. I will come to the question of danger in a moment?—I have no statistics before me that I can refer to.

4885. I am speaking now of health quite apart from accidents—you have no statistics?—I have no statistics.

4886. Now with regard to the question of danger—would the danger to miners be very materially diminished by reducing the hours from nine to eight?—I consider they would be.

4887. Is that simply because their work would be shorter and therefore the chances of accident fractionally less in proportion to the reduction?—The hours would be less it is true; then there could be better time for the repairers than they have at present. Mind, I mean establishing the eight hours and one shift only, not as at present worked in some places, two shifts.

4888. But you have not inquired into the working of the two-shift system in Northumberland, I think you said, in answer to Sir William

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

Lewis?—No, I have not inquired into the working of the two-shift system in Northumberland, but we have many places in South Wales where the two shifts are in vogue.

4889. And your experience is that there the safety of the mine is less well looked after?—I should not say that it is less looked after, but I say that danger by the two shifts, in my opinion, is increased, because supposing that I were working to-day and you came to work across to me to-night, it might be that I should be a little careless or indifferent, and I might not leave that working place as safe as I should leave it; consequently you would be coming into the place on the next shift, and you would have to come into the place in the position in which I left it careless and indifferent, perhaps, as the case may be. You would not be, as it were your own protector.

4890. And you consider that the increase of safety secured by a legal eight hours' day would be so great as to justify you in coming to Parliament and asking Parliament to interfere on your behalf in a way in which you would not propose to interfere with any other industry?—Yes, I do.

4891. Now, Sir William Lewis asked you whether you had considered the economical effects of a change like that, and I think you said that you had not considered them, but you added that in your belief such a change would not increase the cost of production?—Yes, that was my answer.

4892. If you have not considered the question, on what do you base your conclusion?—Well, I have not considered it, as we may say, thoroughly, but I have considered it in this way; I have been looking at what were the hours worked in the mines previous to 1872, although I admit this, that the Act of 1872 does not interfere with adult labour, but that the principle of nine hours in our districts in South Wales has been established on the ground that the nine hours was established for lads under 16 years of age. Since that time the hours worked in mines have been materially less than they were previously, and I fail to find out that the cost of production has increased. But this we know that the number of collieries opened since that period has greatly increased.

4893. But you have not really looked into the question so far as to be able to satisfy yourself that that is the case; you merely argue from certain indications such as the increase of collieries, and you have not really been in a position to study the question effectually?—No I have not. I am not in a position to say that I have studied the profits realised before the establishing of these hours or since.

4894. The opposition raised by the employers is, I presume, raised on economical grounds, is it not?—Yes, I believe so.

4895. And therefore in their opinion the increase of cost consequent upon a legislative eight hours' day would be considerable?—The employers, I believe, think that.

4896. I think you also said, in reply to Sir William Lewis, that even if an eight hours' day did materially increase the cost of production you would still insist upon it?—Yes.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

4897. And the general ground that you gave for such interference was—I took down your words, and you will correct me if I repeat them wrongly—that there was a necessity for an eight hours' day in order to give the men an opportunity of improving their position, socially or otherwise?—Yes.

4898. Now, supposing that the economical effect was such as to cause a considerable number of collieries to be shut up altogether, that would throw a large number of men out of work, would it not?—I do not think it would be the cause of closing collieries.

4899. If you remember, you said that you would insist upon legislation whether the economical effect was disastrous or not?—Yes.

4900. Therefore I am for the moment proceeding upon the assumption that the economical effect would be disastrous, and I ask you, if a large number of collieries were closed, what would be the position of the workmen employed in those collieries?—I think that if a large number of the small collieries were closed it would only be a means of perhaps giving the other employers opportunities of supplying their contracts from the collieries that would be working; therefore that number of hands could be employed in those collieries which would be still working.

4901. I am assuming that the effect would be so disastrous as to close a considerable number of collieries, and I ask you what the position of the men employed in that district would be in that case?—Well, I do not think it would have much effect, because they would get work elsewhere.

4902. Where?—Where the employers would increase the output by the increased number of hands, because it stands to reason that the coal would have to be supplied from somewhere or another.

4903. But is it necessary that it should be supplied from any particular district?—If the coal was not supplied from a particular district those men could go to other districts where the coal was supplied.

4904. Supposing the coal had to be supplied from abroad?—I do not think there is much danger of that.

4905. You are aware that there is a considerable competition between foreign collieries and our own collieries?—Yes; it is possible that there may be a competition, but I do not think so far that foreign collieries have any chance whatever of competing with our own collieries.

4906. Suppose a large number of men were thrown out of work, and the supply of coal in consequence of the change came from abroad instead of from this country, do you think the miners would, on the whole, be gainers by the change?—Well, it is almost impossible to say.

4907. Then is it not very rash to say that you would be in favour of such a change

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

quite irrespective of the economical effect that it might produce?—Well, we should like to try the experiment. I am fully persuaded that there would be no loss, in fact I am fully persuaded that there would be a gain.

Sir *William Lewis.*

4908. May I ask you one question upon a reply given to Mr. Balfour? What have you in your mind when you use the words "double shift," you have said that you did not know the arrangements of the double shift in the North? —Yes.

4909. And you gave an answer to Mr. Balfour in reference to that. I wish to know upon what assumption you gave that answer—two turns of 12 hours, or two shifts of eight hours each with an interval of eight hours between that and the next shift?—I do not think that I mentioned two turns of eight hours.

4910. You said "there is a double shift in our district;" what place had you in your mind when you used that expression?—There are some collieries which I say now——

4911. Where?—Are working the two shifts system.

4912. Where?—We had a report at our council meeting yesterday that the system of double shift is introduced now very rapidly in the Albion Colliery.

4913. That is a double turn?—I mean the double shift on the coal.

4914. That is the distinction I want you to draw. When you make comparisons as to the effect of double shift in the south as against double shift in the north, you say that the place would not have time to cool?—Yes.

4915. There is an eight hours' interval between the last shift and the first shift of the following day in the north?—I said before that I am not in favour of the system of working in the north of England, but where the double shift is in existence, in our own district—I know of some collieries even in my own district where the double shift has been in existence, where the men start work at seven o'clock in the morning, start going down, and then leave at four or half-past four. The night shift comes in always at six o'clock in the night, and there is an interval of about two hours or 2½ hours, or perhaps three hours.

4916. That is double turn?—Well, yes, double turn.

Mr. *Dale.*

4917. I understood you to express your disagreement with the suggestion of a double shift in connexion with a reduction to eight hours?—Yes, I disagree with the principle of double shift altogether, but I say it is in existence in some places already, although I disagree with it.

Sir *William Lewis.*

4918. That is the double turn, you mean?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale.*

4919. That is the point. If I remember rightly, the first occasion on which you were asked whether you would be favourable to a double-shift system was in connexion with and after you had expressed the opinion that Parliament should limit the hours of underground labour to eight?—Yes.

4920. In that case of course I assumed that you meant to say that you object to a double shift, even though it were one of eight hours?—Yes, I object to the double shift.

4921. Even though it is one of eight hours?—Even though it is one of eight hours.

4922. And even though being one of eight hours there would have been an eight hours' interval between the last shift of one day and the first shift of the next?—But there could not be an eight hours' interval all through; there could be an eight hours' interval, of course, in cutting coal, but if there was an eight hours' interval, we will say, from the morning shift to the night shift, then the morning shift would have to take on without any interval whatever.

4923. I said there would be an interval?—From the first to the second shift; but then from the second to the first they would go on successively.

Sir *William Lewis.*

4924. Had you or had you not in your mind, when you said that the mine would not have time to cool, a double shift of eight hours each with an interval of eight hours, as suggested by the Chairman, or what is known in South Wales as the double turn?—What I mean is this: that if we had eight hours for the first shift on the coal we should then have eight hours for repairing, and we should have an interval of eight hours for the mines to cool before the morning shift, the next one, would commence on the coal.

4925. Then the mine cannot cool at the same time that it is being repaired?—Well, it might cool, but not to the extent that it could cool if there was no one in the mine. Supposing, for instance, that we had 500 or 600 men in the colliery at the same time, each man with his lamp lit, that must in my opinion heat the atmosphere considerably; consequently, after those men have worked their eight hours the horses travelling backwards and forwards bringing their coal out and so forth, and dust flying about as it does sometimes, the atmosphere must be impure after that eight hours' work.

4926. Can you suggest any colliery in South Wales where there are any number of men approaching that engaged in repairing at night? —No. I say on the coal in the first place—in the first shift on the coal. I am not speaking about 500 repairers. But we know this, that there are from 60 to 80, or even 100, repairers working in the pit at the same time, but not repairing only,—repairing and doing other work.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

4927. You mentioned an insurance society which demanded a larger premium in the case

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

of miners than in the case of workmen in other trades; do you know what the difference between the respective premiums is?—I think it is 25 per cent. if I remember rightly, but the resolution was not carried.

4928. It was proposed?—It was proposed, but when it came before the High Court it was rejected.

4929. And you only know one insurance society which demands a higher premium?—They proposed it on the ground, I believe, that they thought that the miner was more subject to accidents, &c., than any other class of industry.

4930. You know that there are many insurance societies in existence? Do you know any other that proposed to raise the premium in the case of miners?—No.

4931. And even in that case the resolution was not finally carried?—I remember that case particularly because I am a member of that and other societies.

4932. The insurance would include insurance against death from causes other than accidents and from accidents also?—The percentage, as I have already said, was 25 per cent., because the society believed that the miner was more subject to accidents and to ill health.

Mr. *Burt.*

4933. You were asked by Sir William Lewis if you were aware that strikes were more numerous where an umpire had been appointed, and you said you were not aware?—No.

4934. Has a report ever reached you of workmen in the north of England having refused to abide by a decision of an umpire after they have been a party to his appointment?—I am not sufficiently acquainted with the details of the north of England, and I should not like to commit myself to anything to say whether it occurred or not. I do not for the present remember anything of the kind.

4935. When you advocate the appointment of an umpire, do you mean only that an independent chairman of the committee should be appointed or a county court judge, or some man entirely independent of mining?—I say it should be a person quite independent of the question that is to come before him.

4936. That is your opinion when you advocate the appointment of an umpire?—I should be quite willing to accept the district county court judge or any person in power.

Mr. *Mawdsley.*

4937. I should like to ask you one or two questions with regard to the black list. I understood you to say, in answer to Sir William Lewis, that there were collieries that were black-listed by the workmen, but that they were following the example of the employers. Did I correctly understand you?—Yes.

4938. Would you make workmen who did this amenable to the law, just as you would employers?—I do not know about that—about

Mr. *Mawdsley*—continued.

how far we should be able to carry that. What I would say is this: I should like to see that principle done away with entirely, and I do not know of anything that could do away with it but the appointment of an umpire to settle questions in dispute.

4939. My question is not as to the doing away with it, but is whether, if you want to make it contrary to the law for the workmen, you wish to do the same with regard to the employers?—We could not get one law for the employers and another for the workmen, it is true. The same law would have to prevail for both parties.

4940. And you are quite prepared to have a law of that sort, and that it should be enforced upon workpeople as well as employers?—We must do what we can to avoid it first of all.

4941. You said you would have a law making it an offence for employers to do it, but are you prepared to say whether a law of that kind should make it an offence both against the workpeople and the employers?—I am prepared to see a law established which would give the workmen the same fair play as the employer, and the employer the same fair play as the workman.

4942. Then I cannot get an answer from you as to whether you would be prepared to have a law enacted, making it an offence both against workpeople and employers?—I do not think I can answer the question any straighter than that; I think that is a straight answer.

Mr. *Austin.*

4943. Do you occupy an official position in the Miners' Association?—I am the agent of the Neath, Swansea, and Llanelly district.

4944. According to your knowledge of that district, are there any collieries where men are working less than eight hours?—As I have already said, cutters may be.

4945. What proportion of them are there?—There would be a very small per-centage of cutters.

4946. How did you ascertain the feelings of the miners with regard to the legal enactment of an eight hours' day?—We have our district meetings, and we have the representatives of each lodge attending the district meeting monthly, and we send out circulars for each representative coming to the district meeting to lay before the workmen that he represented in the following district meeting, and the resolutions from each set of workmen were brought to the district meeting, and they were unanimous.

4947. Has the reduction of the hours of labour within past years interfered with the output in the collieries?—Not to my knowledge.

4948. Would the further reduction of the hours of labour interfere with the output?—It may perhaps for the commencement, but I do not think in the long run that it would greatly interfere.

4949. Would it have a serious effect upon the coal trade?—No, I do not think it would.

4950. You have stated that strikes have increased for the past two years; do those

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

—I agree with him generally on that question, Yes.

4974. Is there anything which you would like to add?—I do not think there is on that question of an umpire. I think it would be to the advantage of both parties if an umpire were appointed. I do not think it is necessaay for me to go over the same ground as Mr. Evans has done. I generally agree with him on that question.

4975. Do you also agree with the view he expressed as to the sliding scale being a convenient and desirable mode of regulating general wages?—Yes; I believe in the principle. I think it is a very good and very fair way of dividing the profits between employer and employed.

4976. Have there been strikes lately in your district as distinguished, of course, from the district represented by Mr. Evans?—We have not had any general strike. We had one very important strike which Mr. Richards will deal with, because it was in the immediate locality where he acts as agent and where he resides, and because he was officially connected with the strike more directly than myself. We have had other strikes, but of minor importance; nothing but the one I refer to since the establishment of the sliding scale agreement.

4977. Do you personally desire to offer any observations upon the causes of the strikes in your district, or of the mode in which they might have been avoided or may in future be avoided?—The improvement of the sliding scale agreement in the direction of the appointment of an umpire would, in my opinion, be calculated to lessen the friction, and help us considerably to arrive at agreements when disputes do arise.

4978. May I take it then, that in your opinion the existence of a sliding scale for automatically regulating the general wages of the district, and the existence of a Sliding Scale Committee or Joint Committee for dealing with local disputes or alleged breaches of the sliding scale agreement, if supplemented by the appointment of an umpire, would provide the best means for avoiding strikes?—I think so. If that committee were constituted as a Conciliation Board with the power to appoint an umpire, compulsorily of course when they failed to agree, after exhausting all other means, I think it would be the means of reducing strikes.

4979. What observations do you desire to offer in regard to the reduction of the hours of labour by agreement, or by legislation or otherwise?—By legislation. I think that eight hours from bank to bank is a sufficient length of time for a person to be employed below the ground.

4980. On what ground do you think that a reduction to eight hours should be made compulsory by Parliament as distinguished from being made the subject of negotiation?—In the first place I am of the opinion that it would be beneficial to the health both moral and physical of the men employed under ground, and I have also reason to believe that in those districts where the greatest number of hours are worked per day the largest number of accidents take place, from falls of roof and sides more particularly, and I naturally came to the conclusion that if the hours were reduced in those districts that work long hours at the present time those accidents would also be reduced, and therefore it would be conducive to the safety of the miner.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

4981. My question was rather, why do you think that should be brought about by legislation?—I think that when it can be proved that the miner's life is in any degree endangered, or his limbs endangered, legislation should step in and say that that shall not be so, as it has done on previous occasions.

4982. You think it could be shown to Parliament that the difference between a miner being underground nine hours and being underground eight hours would so diminish accidents or illness, as the result of protracted underground labour, as to justify that?—I think it would as regards accidents. Perhaps it would be more difficult to get statistics to prove that it would be conducive to the morality; but I believe that also, as a matter of opinion, I mean the intelligence and the moral and the social condition of the miner would be improved.

4983. I should like you to have the opportunity of expressing fully your further views upon that question if you desire to volunteer any?—It is chiefly upon those grounds—the grounds of safety—that I would ask Parliament to step in and reduce the hours of labour by Act of Parliament.

4984. Do you wish to offer any observation on the question of the present sufficiency or insufficiency of the inspection of mines?—Yes; I am of the opinion that the mines in my district are not at present sufficiently and adequately inspected. I have no fault to find with the inspectors themselves, for the simple reason, I believe, that they have got too much work to do to efficiently inspect the workings.

4985. May I take it that what Mr. Evans has expressed upon that subject is also your view?—If any one wishes to ask questions as to why I hold this opinion I may give cases where it is clear that additional inspectors would be beneficial to the miner. I find that whenever an examination takes place on behalf of the workmen by workmen appointed by them that has a beneficial effect upon the employer and the men.

4986. Do the workmen of your district avail themselves of the power of appointing two of their number?—Very often, it is not general; but I would say that at the majority of collieries they do, especially at the large collieries.

4987. Is there any other point on which you desire to give evidence?—Yes, on the question of unskilled labour.

4988. What do you desire to say upon that subject?—I have reason to believe unskilled labour is introduced into our mines and that the present Act is inadequate to prevent it, for the simple reason that it does not provide means for applying the Act. There are no means provided in the Act whereby the clause can be applied, and although it is difficult to bring cases to

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

to exist. I think that organisation on both sides, instead of serving to increase such a condition of things, should really decrease it, and that is my experience, and my opinion.

4996. I am rather putting it to you that two Associations, one representing the employers, and the other representing the employed, have mutual relations which in the main avert strikes, but which may fail in some particular case to do so?—Yes.

4997. And I put it to you whether, in such an event, it is not almost inevitable that the employer would abstain from employing the men who were out, or that the men's Association would dissuade their members from going to work at a colliery whose ordinary workmen were out?—I do not think so. I do not think it should be so, and I do not think it is really so as a matter of fact. I mean to say organisation on both sides is in my opinion conducive to the welfare of both parties, and also to reduce friction between both parties. For me to admit what you say would be to admit that it would be increasing friction, and that is contrary to my experience.

4998. My only object was to draw out your views upon the point, and the case I was putting to you was merely intended to elicit your opinion upon what would be likely to happen if, in spite of usually well maintained relationships, a strike did arise; is there any other point on which you desire to offer observations?—Yes, there is one question of night work and its remuneration. The principle is generally admitted in our district to give extra remuneration for work done by night, both to the coal hewers and also to repairers. But there is a very bad principle which the men are just now trying to get remedied, especially in the district that I represent. The repairers, or the men who work for so much per turn by night, are compensated for their working by night, by their having what we term six turns for five nights' work, or in other words, it is not exactly six turns for five nights' work; but instead of working 54 hours per week as they do by day, the men by night work about 50 hours per week; so that the four hours that they work less than the day men is supposed to be compensation for the inconvenience that they are to put to through working by night. And this is the thing that the men have to complain of, that when they lose a turn, they not only lose the actual turn that they lose, but they take the extra turn off them, so that it reduces it to this: that the man working by night, instead of having something conceded to them for working by night, when they lose this turn they really have to concede something to the employer; and what we ask is, that when a turn is lost by night through the employer having no waggons or something of that kind, instead of taking the whole of the extra turn off the man that he should only take a portion of it, say a quarter of it.

4999. I will not ask you any further questions upon that, because it seems to me rather a special and local matter in regard to which you would like to see an improvement in the

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

conditions of hiring; is there any other matter of which you desire to speak?—I do not see that there is anything else.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

5000. You are in favour of a legal eight hours' day, and you base your demand that Parliament should in your case depart from the principles it has hitherto acted upon, on two grounds, the ground of health and the ground of safety. Let me ask you the question which I asked Mr. Evans, what statistics have you got to show that the health of the miners is worse than that of workmen employed in other trades?—I think I said with regard to the health I thought it would be more difficult to ascertain figures.

5001. You were speaking of moral health, I am speaking of physical health?—I was speaking of accidents.

5002. Then you have no evidence with regard to health, you merely record your impression?—That is my opinion that it would improve the social and moral condition of the men to have their hours reduced, that it would give them more chance to improve themselves, and they would be less hours in an atmosphere which is calculated to damage their health, and they would have an opportunity also of improving themselves mentally and morally.

5003. But you have no definite reason to suppose that as a matter of fact the health of miners is worse than that of workmen employed in other industries?—I could not give statistics.

5004. Do you know whether there are any Government statistics available in connexion with this subject?—Not that I am aware of.

5005. Were you present at the conference between the representatives of the Miners' Federation and the Coal Owners at Westminster at the beginning of this year?—At one conference I was.

5006. Was that the first or second?—The first.

5007. You have not read the proceedings at the second?—Yes, I think I have read the proceedings.

5008. You are aware that at that second meeting certain statistics were brought forward?—Yes, I am aware that statistics were brought forward. I did not study them, at least not minutely.

5009. With regard to the accidents, do you think that accidents would be materially diminished if the hours of labour were reduced from nine to eight?—I do.

5010. Do you mean by that merely that in nine hours more accidents are likely to happen than in eight hours?—I mean this, that in those districts where the long hours are in operation there are more accidents caused by fall of roofs and sides than in those districts where the short hours are in operation.

5011. More than in proportion to the larger number of hours worked?—Yes.

5012. Does that mean that more accidents happen towards the end of the shift?—I am

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

5033. You have not worked in Durham or Northumberland?—I have not worked in Durham or Northumberland.

5034. But on the whole your view is that the economic difficulty is exaggerated, because the output would remain much the same and the cost of production would not be increased; is that so?—My contention is this, that I cannot see any reason why the cost of production should be increased, or even the productive power of the mine reduced by a reduction in the hours of labour, and I base that upon the fact that in those districts where the short hours are worked the greatest production per man is in vogue.

Mr. *Fowler.*

5035. I suppose your contention is this, that a man who works nine hours underground is in a more exhausted state mentally and physically than a man who only works eight?—That is my experience.

5036. And he is better able to take the several precautions against accidents if he only works eight hours?—I would naturally infer that from the statistics.

5037. You say that the nine hours with you is nine hours underground and not from bank to bank?—Nine hours underground; generally speaking these are the recognised hours.

5038. What do you say there would be in addition to that from bank to bank?—I said it would be about half an hour, take it generally, some collieries more.

5039. Would half an hour cover the going up and down in your district?—In some collieries it would not take that much, in others it would take more; I take it as an average.

5040. Whatever time may be taken going up and down, going to and from his work, is nine hours in your district, nine hours actual work on the face of the coal?—That is nine hours, not from bank to bank; but down the pit nine hours.

5041. What do the wages depend upon, the number of hours and the quantity of work done?—The wages of the hewer depend upon the amount of coal he cuts.

5042. Now, supposing the hours were reduced by legislation from nine hours to eight, how would that affect the wages?—I believe that the hewers in South Wales and Monmouthshire—and I speak more particularly of the steam coal miners now—could do their work in a shorter number of hours than they do at present, and if the employer would provide them with the necessary trams to fill the coal that their wages would not be reduced.

5043. You are of opinion that the production would remain as it is now, and therefore that the employer would in no way lose?—There is no reason why the production per man should not increase.

5044. But assuming that that should not turn out to be correct, and that the quantity was reduced, of course the man's wages would follow the quantity?—I do not see that there is any

Mr. *Fowler*—continued.

data upon which to base that assumption. The data is that it would increase.

5045. I am asking you to assume that the quantity was reduced, and if so, would it mean a reduction of wages?—It must. If the man does not produce so much coal he must have a reduction in the price of his labour unless his cutting price is increased.

5046. I suppose the liability of employers in your district in case of accidents is heavy?—The workmen pay 100 per cent. towards what we call the Permanent Relief Society, the employer pays 25 per cent. of the workmen's contribution.

5047. That is to the fund?—Yes.

5048. That is a regular payment?—That is a regular payment.

5049. Supposing an accident does occur, does it not inflict some decided pecuniary loss upon the coal owner?—It just depends upon the nature of the accident; if it was an explosion that blew the pit up it would.

5050. Do you think that that affords a sufficiently strong motive to the employer not to employ incompetent people who might involve him in the risk and loss of an accident?—I should say so if he is a reasonable person, and I take it that employers are, but they have not always got direct control over their mines. If you will allow me to explain, I think I can explain how that does not always operate. While it would be wrong for me to say that it would not be to an employer's disadvantage to employ incompetent workmen I would say this, that my experience is this, as a representative of the men, that the employer generally brings pressure to bear upon his manager to get out as much coal as possible, and, in order to please his employer, to enhance his own reputation as a manager, he does this, and sometimes, according to my opinion, at the expense of the safety of the workpeople.

5051. Then do you think that legislation should step in between a careless employer and an incompetent manager in order to regulate the qualification of the men working the mine?—I certainly do.

5052. After an examination you suggested a certificate of competency?—Yes. I was speaking then of unskilled labour, 39th General Rule of the Mines Act.

5053. That does not prevail, does it, in any other trade where there is a great risk to human life?—The apprentice system is in vogue in other trades to a very large extent.

5054. Let us take an engine-driver for instance, an engine-driver would be a competent man for the work?—What engine-driver do you refer to? A colliery engine-driver?

5055. I will take them both, a locomotive driver and a colliery engine-driver?—I think as to the colliery engine-driver there is provision made in the Act he shall not be employed before he is of a certain age.

Mr. *Fowler*—continued.

5056. That does not prove he is competent as an engine-driver?—I would reply in this way to that, that from the very nature of the employment of an engine-man it would be impossible for an incompetent person to perform the work. But it is not always so in a mine, especially in South Wales and Monmouth, from the very nature of the strata, and I refer now more particularly to the steam coal collieries, where the coal is easy to get from between the strata. There is not the skill required that there is when the coal is hard, and where it requires what we term holing and spragging, and also blasting; and while that is so the man wants the requisite knowledge and experience of the top and the sides in order to protect himself against the dangers of the top and the sides, so that it would be possible to put a man to work at coal getting in many places in South Wales and Monmouth that would really go and pull the coal out of the strata, but he would not be able to protect himself against the dangers of the roof and the side.

5057. What reason do you give us for your belief that legislation with reference to the reduction of the hours of labour is better than arrangement. In the north of England, as you know, the hours have been reduced by arrangement between the employers and the employed?—Yes.

5057*a*. Why do you think that is hopeless in your district?—I believe it would be. As I have said before, it would be impossible to have a continuation, in my opinion, and a uniform system of hours unless legislation does step in.

5058. You think that legislation is preferable to the misery and loss of a strike?—I think so.

Mr. *Burt.*

5059. I think you said you had 8,000 members?—Yes.

5060. And did you state the total number of men and boys employed in the district?—I said that there would be about 15,000 or 16,000 employed in and about the collieries connected with my Association, and about 8,000 of these would be in the Union.

5061. When you say 15,000 or 16,000 do you include all persons employed?—All underground.

5062. With regard to the hours I think you said that the recognised hours were 54 per week, and that the hours in the face were nine a day?—I did not say in the face. I said they were not from bank to bank.

5063. You gave, I think, 9½ hours; did I understand you to mean that was about the average from bank to bank?—That is it, from bank to bank, about 9½ the average.

5064. Do the pits draw coal nine hours as a rule?—Yes; in some cases more.

5065. Have you cases of men and boys working more than the nine and half hours to any great extent?—Not boys that I am aware of. Do you mean by boys, boys under 16?

5066. No, I mean those above the age at which they are protected by the Act. Have you men and youths above 16 years of age, working more than the 9½ hours?—Yes; there are many cases of it, I have no doubt.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

5067. What would be the maximum, should you say?—That they work in my district do you mean?

5068. I mean from bank to bank?—There are many going out nearly every hour the pit works; where they should go out at four they are going out at five, and in some collieries the hauliers and the hitchers will work until 5 o'clock, and in some cases even after then, in order to get the coal out.

5069. And when did they begin, those that worked up to that time?—They would begin at the time the others began, at half-past six.

5070. Ten and a half hours?—Yes, in many instances eleven, some few persons. I do not say this is general.

5071. Then with regard to the coal-getters, do they also work more than the nine hours?—In some instances; nearly every turn you will see the men coming out in the turn time to go off. After the understood time to give over they will be coming out perhaps half an hour or three-quarters of an hour; later some of them.

5072. Have you endeavoured, by the action of your Association, to reduce the hours?—We have, in the same way as described by Mr. Evans.

5073. Have you succeeded to any extent?—Not at all, to my knowledge

5074. In Monmouthshire the Union in its present strength is comparatively recent, is it not?—It is.

5075. Since the Union began, have the hours been reduced at all?—Not at all, that I am aware of.

Mr. *Trow.*

5076. You are in favour of a legal enactment of eight hours?—Yes.

5077. Would you ask Parliament, in enacting a legal eight hours, to stipulate that no district should work more than eight hours in the 24?—I do not exactly grasp your question.

5078. I am referring to the double shift. My object is to understand what the eight hours means, I do not yet. Would you ask Parliament, in enacting a legal eight hours, to stipulate that only eight hours should be worked in each and every district alike, or that each district should be left to itself to work more than eight hours out of the 24?—I would ask that Parliament should make it law that no colliery should work more than eight hours, no miner, no person employed underground should work more than eight hours.

5079. Could two miners work 16 hours out of the 24, or would you have it that only one man should work eight hours in the 24, or two men should work; eight each in the 24?—You refer to the double shift?

5080. Yes?—I am against the double shift.

5081. Would you ask Parliament to deal with that?—That is a question I have not given full consideration to.

5082. You stated, in reply to Mr. Balfour, I think, that you did not consider there was much

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

difference between the coal in England and Wales, so far as getting it was concerned, and you said you had worked in England and Wales?—I said I did not think there was so much difference in the nature of the strata as to warrant the difference in the production per man per annum.

5083. Do you consider that coal mining is more dangerous in Wales than in Northumberland and Durham?—Yes, I do.

5084. And that the pits require more time to clear?—It is more dangerous for some reason or another. I attribute it in a degree to the unskilled labour which we have to deal with more in South Wales and Monmouth than they have in the north of England and in the Midlands.

5085. Have you any proof that in Durham and Northumberland more roofs fall, or more accidents occur owing to their double shift, (taking into consideration the number of men employed on the double shift,) than there is in Wales or any other district?—I do not exactly grasp your question. Before I answer it I would like to be clear about it.

5086. You stated that where longer hours were worked more accidents occurred through roofs falling, &c. I ask you, have you any proof that in Durham and Northumberland, where the double shift is worked of eight hours or seven, that there are more roofs falls and more accidents occur than there are where you work single shift, comparing the number of men employed?—What I say is this, that there are less accidents in Northumberland and Durham in proportion to the men employed than there are in South Wales and Monmouthshire.

5087. And yet they work double shift?—They work double shift.

5088. While you work single shift?—I have explained that in my opinion one reason is because there are longer hours worked in South Wales and Monmouth. Another reason is, because we have more difficulty with unskilled labour than they have in Northumberland and Durham.

5089. We had here at the last meeting a gentleman representing the legal enactment eight hours, and if Parliament is to deal with this matter I want it to deal fairly with all districts. The suggestion of the legal enactment eight hours representative was, that there should be three shifts of hewers at six hours, and two shifts of datal men of eight hours. Now I want to know whether you would ask Parliament to prevent that, or you would work one shift in South Wales and let another district work three?—No, I certainly would not ask Parliament to do that.

5090. Then do you think you could hold your own?—I do not advocate two shifts or three shifts,

5091. Do you think you can hold your own in Wales, working single shift and refusing to work double with the north working at treble shift of hewers, and double shift of datal men; would it be fair to the colliery owners in the other district?—I do not exactly grasp your question. If you will ask it again in some other language, or in some other way, and make it a little more clear,—perhaps I am dull of comprehension—I will answer it.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

5092. The suggestion of the legal enactment eight hour representative was that we should have three shifts of hewers of six hours, and two shifts of datal and other men at eight hours?—Where I get at sea with you is as to who this legal enactment gentleman is. If you will kindly make it a little more plain I shall be pleased.

5093. He represented the Legal Enactment League of Newcastle, Northumberland and Durham in the Miners' Association. He is in favour of the legal enactment. Now I ask you if the steam coal owners in Northumberland are allowed to have three shifts of six hours, hewers and two shifts of other men, eight hours out of the 24, and you will only allow the coal owners in Wales to have a single shift, and not work a double shift, and shall you be able to hold your own, or is it fair to the Welsh coal owners?—Certainly, if we can hold our own and the one shift is generally in vogue. I should think the employers would be able to hold their own if they introduced the six hours' shift in Northumberland.

5094. If Parliament deals with the eight hours, should it not apply to every district and every man employed alike?—If Parliament enacts that eight hours should be worked?

5095. Yes?—You mean no more than eight hours should be worked?

5096. They should deal with the whole?—They should enact that no more than eight hours should be worked.

5097. Out of the 24?—Yes, per man out of the 24—no man shall work more than eight hours out of the 24.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

5098. I think you said that the principal reason you wanted the eight hours is that you think it would conduce to the welfare of the men?—Yes, that is my case.

5099. But I think you said also that you had not yet got out the statistics as to whether the occupation was more unhealthy than others or not?—I did.

5100. So that it is only an idea?—That is my opinion, yes.

5101. Then I think you said that you thought also it would be safer to work eight hours only. I want to ask you this. If a man were bound to come out and be at the top or on the surface of the ground in eight hours, do you think it might conduce to his trying to get his coal out without putting timber up properly?—I do not.

5102. Why?—Because I believe that, so far as my district is concerned, generally speaking—and as I have said before, I refer more particularly to the steam coal—that he would have time to do his work, and do it well, and do it with safety.

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

5103. Do not you think the fear would be that he would be in a great hurry and think, "Now the roof will stop up a little bit longer; "I am bound to be out in 10 minutes, and "therefore I will run the risk"?—A man with foresight and practical experience would not be led into a trap of that kind.

5104. Is there not now a great difficulty to get men to put the timber up; is not that one of the great difficulties that managers have to contend with?—It is very often a matter of opinion that creates that difficulty between the practical and experienced workman and the manager.

5105. Then it is not your opinion that there is a difficulty in getting them put up?—Not the necessary timber, according to the opinion of the practical workman, in order to ensure his safety.

5106. Your experience is different to mine. Then you said, I think, with regard to unskilled labour, that in South Wales there was a good deal of unskilled labour, but in some instances the employers have sent out men from the pits because they proved to be unskilled?—It was

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

proved by the very fact that they did not know how to go about their work, and they did not know anything about the cutting coal.

5107. Does not that show that the employers do not want to employ unskilled men?—It showed it in that particular instance, evidently.

5108. Then I think you said also that you considered that the reason that there were fewer accidents in Northumberland and Durham was because there were shorter hours worked?—That was one reason I think.

5109. Do you look upon that as the principal reason?—It may probably be.

5110. I want something more than probabilities. It is rather a serious question and one ought to have a definite answer?—It is impossible for me of course to ascertain the proportions of each.

5111. Do you know the mines of Northumberland and Durham?—I have never been in a Northumberland or Durham mine. I simply took it from the statistics, and these are the natural deductions I drew.

The witnesses withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at half-past eleven o'clock.

ELEVENTH DAY.

Commission Room, Westminster Hall, Wednesday, 18th November 1891.

PRESENT:

MR. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

The Right Hon. H. H. FOWLER, M.P.
Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. W. ABRAHAM, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Sir WM. LEWIS.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.
Mr. E. TROW.
Mr. T. H. ISMAY (Group B.), the Right Hon. A. J. MUNDELLA, M.P., the Right Hon. LEONARD COURTNEY, M.P., Sir JOHN E. GORST, Q.C., M.P., Mr. M. AUSTIN, and Mr. JAMES MAWDSLEY (Group C.), also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Joint Secretaries.

Mr. ALFRED ONIONS recalled and further examined.

Sir *William Lewis.*

5112. How long have you worked as a collier?—17 years.

5113. Where did you commence working as a collier?—In North Staffordshire.

5114. At what age did you go into the pit?—15 years of age.

5115. What training did you go through to become an experienced collier?—I commenced on the first day or two with what they call minding the door, and then I went to waggoning as it is called there; and I went then to taking off at jigs, which is understood in North Staffordshire, and driving a horse. I then worked as a filler, and then as a stint-holer, and then to a stall-man. I am simply giving you now my experience in North Staffordshire. I have worked as a timber man for two years in South Wales besides working as a collier in South Wales and Monmouthshire.

5116. When did you start working in South Wales?—In 1883.

5117. So that the whole experience you have had in Monmouthshire and South Wales is eight years?—From eight to nine years.

5118. In what seams have you worked as a coal getter in South Wales?—I worked in the Black vein, in the big vein, and the Two-feet mine, and a short time in the Two-feet mine.

5119. At what collieries?—At Risca Old colliery for two years in the Big vein and a few shifts in the Abercarn colliery on the coal. Most of the time I was there I was timber man, and I worked in the Ocean for five weeks in the Two-feet nine inches.

5120. Summing up the whole time that you have worked as a collier in Monmouthshire

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

and South Wales, you have been in that district eight years, and miners' agent for some time. I want to ascertain the extent of your experience?—Well no, I have been check weigher.

5121. In Monmouthshire and South Wales?—In Monmouthshire and South Wales I think about five years in Monmouthshire and South Wales.

5122. Now about the views you have expressed here on the various points put to you, are they your own or do they represent the views of the 8,000 workmen that you say are in your federation?—They represent the views of the 8,000 men.

5123. How have they been ascertained?—They have been asertained by sending out forms that were got up by us, asking questions of every secretary, every lodge secretary, colliery secretary and by delegates attending monthly meetings and by mass meetings.

5124. Were the returns so taken by ballot, or how did you discover the matter?—On the eight hours question in some cases we have had signatures in favour of eight hours from bank to bank.

5125. To what extent?—Out of the Abercarn Colliery 800 working underground, and we got about 600 signatures there, and we had no refusals as far as my memory serves me.

5126. Could you tell the Commission what number of men of those whom you represent have testified to this eight hours?—I say I represent directly the 8,000, indirectly the 15,000 to 16,000.

5127. How many of the 8,000 have signified their desire to have the eight hours, and in what way have you ascertained that?—I have

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

given you the way in which I have ascertained it, by delegate meetings, delegates coming to the meetings, and also at mass meetings, and also in some cases by signatures.

5128. Take your mass meetings for instance, how have you ascertained that; was it by a show of hands?—By a show of hands, certainly.

5129. How many people were at the particular mass meetings?—There was a mass meeting in Ebbw Vale in 1889 when there were from 8,000 to 10,000 people present and there was not a dissentient voice or hand.

5130. Were they all members of your federation?—As far as my knowledge goes they were; there is no doubt that there would be a few stragglers who would come in from the outside.

5131. But there was no ballot?—There was no ballot.

5132. With reference to the circulars that you have issued; would you object to the Commission seeing them?—I have not got one.

5133. Have you filled in any returns?—No.

Mr. *Dale.*

5134. But you are going to do it?—The men thought by sending Mr. Richards and myself that it would be sufficient, but when they understand that it is necessary and essential to have those returns filled in I have no doubt they will do it.

Sir *William Lewis*

5135. During your experience as a collier have you ever worked double shift? I do not mean double turn, but double shift as carried on in the North of England?—Yes.

5136. Where?—In Risca.

5137. For what period?—About 12 months as far as my memory serves me.

5138. And from that experience you condemn double shift?—Yes, I condemn double shift.

5139. For what reason?—Because in the first place it is very difficult to work your coal to the same advantage as you can by the single shift.

5140. Why?—Why, because men are human beings and they very often will not leave the stall or the heading to one another's advantage. That is one reason.

5141. Do you mean to suggest that the men are not true to each other?—That is what it means in that respect; it is very difficult to arrange that matter.

5142. Does not that arise from their not having practised it long enough?—I do not think so. I have not finished my reasons yet. Another reason is because the colliery cannot be kept in proper order by working the double shift. And I am not only expressing the opinions of the men, but I am expressing the opinions of the colliery proprietors, as I have heard them expressed, or of one of them at those particular collieries.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

5143. I have no doubt that they will have an opportunity of expressing their own views?—I am only saying what I have heard them say.

5144. But I have not yet learnt from you what is the reason that the colliery cannot be carried on with the double shift in South Wales as well as it is carried on in the North of England?—I have given you some reasons, and the other reason I have expressed is that the colliery cannot be kept in proper order.

5145. Why?—Because there is not sufficient time to do the repairing work.

5146. Do you suggest that the eight hours interval between the back shift of one day and the fore shift of another is insufficient to carry on the repairs of a South Wales colliery?—I suggest that there is not eight hours for them to do their work in; it is impossible for them to have the eight hours because they want the pit for other purposes, and when they have had the pit for other purposes there is from two to three hours cut off.

5147. What other purposes are required in South Wales which are different from the collieries in the North of England?—I have not worked in the North, but there are the men to raise and lower and there are various materials to put down the shaft.

5148. Is there nothing of that kind in the North?—I take it that there is.

5149. But if you say you know nothing about the North I need not pursue the question?—I have not had any practical experience inasmuch as I have never worked there, but I understand what the double shift is, like every other practical collier does.

5150. There is such a thing as double turn and Mr. Evans, when he was questioned yesterday, was occasionally thinking of double turn when I was talking about double shift, and I want to prevent your mixing up double shift with double turn. My questions apply to double shift pure and simple?—If you would qualify your question and explain it a little further, I shall be able to answer it perhaps.

5151. You know there are two eight hours shifts for the colliers?—Yes.

5152. And eight hours afterwards for the repairers?—Yes, that is what I mean.

5153. Now you made the comparison as to the number of accidents in places carried on by long hours and by short hours?—Yes.

5154. Will you be kind enough to say what places were in your mind?—East Scotland, West Scotland, Newcastle, Durham, Yorkshire, and Lincolnshire, Manchester and Ireland. I am quoting now the inspectors' districts, Liverpool, Midlands, North Staffordshire, and South Wales.

5155. I understand that you are going to put that in?—I will. I have drawn it up in a rough state, and I will put it in a proper form.

5156. Is it fair to arrive at a conclusion of that kind without taking into account the different circumstances under which the various collieries are being worked?—I take it as a

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

whole that in the mining of the United Kingdom there would not be that difference which would make the difference in the results ascertained from the working out of these figures.

5157. Unless you know the mode carried on in the different districts I will not press the question?—I know personally the mode carried on in the two districts.

5158. That is North Staffordshire and South Wales?—Yes, North Staffordshire and South Wales.

5159. And your belief is that collieries working on shorter hours, everything else being equal, there is less risk of accidents?—I do.

5160. Does that table of yours support that?—It does.

5161. That there are fewer accidents?—Fewer accidents in the short-hour district generally than in the long-hour district.

5162. Are you taking the whole of the accidents, or simply the accidents from the falls of roof?—I am taking the accidents from the falls of roof and sides, and I have worked the other out. I have not got them with me, but the whole of the accidents will also produce the same results generally.

Mr. *Dale.*

5163. Is it a table showing the accidents per thousand tons?—The deaths, I should say, deaths per number of men employed.

5164. The deaths per number of men employed?—Yes.

5165. And not per quantity of mineral raised?—Quite so.

Sir *William Lewis.*

5166. Then I misunderstood the answer given by you yesterday. You assumed the accidents in general, and now it comes to the fatal accidents?—It is the fatal accidents. I think the other accidents will work out the same or similar.

5167. In dealing with roof and sides, according to your experience, is a man subject to the same risk of accident from falls of sides in long wall, as he is in pillar and stall?—Certainly not; not from sides; it must be either face or top.

5168. So that in making the comparison you should compare pillar and stall colliery against pillar and stall colliery, and long wall against long wall colliery in order to get at anything like an accurate conclusion from those figures?—I take it that generally the falls from sides occur not in the stalls, nor in the headings, but generally in the repairing of the work.

5169. Where there are no sides in long wall?—In the repairing of the work and the repairing of the roads.

5170. Do you mean to suggest that in the stall roads, although the coal has been taken away, the men receive accidents from negligent walling along the stall roads?—I did not speak of negligent walling; I simply said that in my opinion the greatest number of accidents from falls of sides occur in the repairing of the colliery and the roads.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

5171. And you base that upon your experience as regards South Wales during the time you have been there?—I do.

5172. I will ask that that may be put in?—I would like to work it out a little more elaborately and put it in form. I have my notes on it.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

5173. Those are the statistics of which you spoke to me yesterday?—Some of them. I have the rest here.

Sir *William Lewis.*

5174. Going back to the question of accidents, do you consider it desirable to have as small a number of men as possible liable to the risk of accidents in the colliery in one time?—Well, that would certainly be desirable in a fiery mine.

5175. Not in any other mine?—I do not see that it would as far as I understand the question. In a mine that was subject to explosions, I think it would be desirable if it could be arrived at to have as few men as possible, inasmuch as when explosions take place, especially in some of our dusty mines, they become universal, and all the men are generally destroyed; and from that standpoint I think it would be desirable to have as few men as possible in the pit.

5176. Apply that answer to the majority of the collieries in your district—they are principally safety-lamp mines, are they not?—Yes.

5177. Then perhaps you would also consider it an advantage that the extent of workings should be as limited as possible?—Yes, from that view; taking that view of it in explosive and fiery mines it would be desirable; but I am not contending for it.

5178. Do you regard it as part of the advantage of working double shift, that about one-half of the men are in the colliery at one time as compared with the colliery working the same output by single shift. Are you aware of that?—If I understand your question rightly; but I should like it repeated.

5179. Are you aware that collieries working double shift are capable of turning out the same quantity with half the number of men, and with half the pit room as compared with a single shift colliery?—Certainly; but my opinion and my experience is this: that if the double shift was introduced in South Wales and Monmouthshire, it would not reduce the number of hands at the same time.

5180. Why?—For the reason that they would have as many stalls and headings open as the pit could draw for on one shift, and they would also have as many stalls and headings open as the pit could wind for.

5181. Could not you conceive that a colliery put on double shift would cease drawing beyond what is necessary for the number of men in that particular shift?—I admit that for a time until the arrangements are perfect, it is open to the observation you have made; but once the colliery

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

5201. Are you certain that you have described a Welsh collier in the answer you have given to me?—Do you ask me if I have described a Welsh collier?

5202. Yes?—Speaking from Monmouthshire, my district generally—I will not speak of all the collieries, I speak especially of the steam coal—I say that the men are not supplied with sufficient trams, not so many trams as they could fill in the time.

5203. Do the men do anything but cut coal in South Wales?—Certainly.

5204. What do they do?—They, in some cases, repair their roads, and protect themselves from the dangers of the top and also the face, by putting timber up.

5205. Could not they avoid the lethargic condition by putting up cogs or props?—It is not always that they have cogs and props to put up; it is not necessary always to do so. It does not follow, when they are waiting for a tram, that they have a cog or a prop to put up.

5206. Do you suggest that the actual requirement as to timber for the use of the men in South Wales is not fulfilled?—I do not; I do not mean that.

5207. Are you not aware that there is a provision that timber should be provided?—I am.

5208. And are you also not aware that colliers, when waiting for the trams, if such be the case, can put up cogs, that they do put up cogs, and that they get paid for it?—When required.

5209. What would be the condition of a collier when the hours are reduced as regards putting up these cogs?—What would be the condition?

5210. Yes. When would he have time to put up the cogs? Would he be allowed to remain after the eight hours for putting up cogs, or to do the whole of his duty in the eight hours from bank to bank?—Of course, as to the putting up of the cogs in the eight hours, I would say, if the weight came on a place just as the man was leaving, just as the eight hours were finished, it would be unwise to make that man come out and allow his stall or his heading to fall in for the sake of putting up a few sticks.

5211. Who is to be the judge of that?—Well, I am not going to set myself up for judge, inasmuch as I have not given the matter consideration. It is a matter that can be solved in a very practical manner.

5212. But apart from that your idea on the eight hours is that a man should be prevented from remaining in a stall, if he thought necessary, to make some preparations to enable him to cut more coal on the following day?—I do, except in the case I have described.

5213. Now, as to the number of hours that you said pits work in the district, have you inquired or are you giving a general idea as to that?—I have inquired.

5214. Will you kindly tell me where?—Well, I know from personal experience of Risca and Abercarn.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

5215. Take Abercarn at this moment?—The men are supposed to be down by half-past 6 in the morning, on Monday morning and every morning in the week. On a Monday they commence coming up at 3 o'clock; but Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday they commence coming up at 4 o'clock, and on Saturday they commence coming up at 2 o'clock; and that applies to Risca also.

5216. How many hours do you say that the men in the collieries are engaged in the face at Abercarn and Risca at the present time?—I say that they are down the pit for nine hours.

5217. Is it not nine hours from bank to bank?—It is not.

5218. Then if the owners make that return, it is wrong?—It is wrong.

5219. Will you tell us as to the average number of days that the colliers work in your district?—I have not ascertained that; that is a very difficult question for me to get at. That information is simply in the hands of the employers.

5220. You could not possibly ascertain that?—I do not think so. It would be a very difficult thing to get at.

5221. Do they work on "Mabon's" Monday?—They do not work on the first Monday in the month; is that "Mabon's" Monday.

5222. Yes, it has been referred to here before as "Mabon's" Monday. Could you give the Commission any idea of the per-centage of men at work on the following day, Tuesday?—I could not, but probably there are not so many men on the Tuesday as there are on an ordinary Tuesday.

5223. But you have no idea of the number of men absent?—Oh, there are men absent.

5224. You could not estimate them?—I could not.

5225. Could you tell us about Wednesday?—Well, it is certainly better on Wednesday, but it may have a prejudicial effect on Wednesday's attendance as well.

5226. Will you say that the colliers work more than four and a half days a week in your district?—Do you mean now? I take it you mean that when there are six days for them to work.

5227. Yes?—Do they work four and a half?

5228. Yes?—My opinion is that they do more.

5229. Perhaps you will tell us how you arrive at that, because you could not tell the number of men?—I simply express that opinion.

5230. Without any foundation for it?—Certainly my own personal experience.

5231. So that if the owners return four and a half days, they are wrong again?—Well, I do not know; I am not going to say that far about expressing an opinion. I have not any means of ascertaining the information that you ask for, but I do express an opinion that when there are six days' work for the men to do they work more than four and a half on an average.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

5232. One of the advantages you claimed for the eight hours was that they would have far more time to themselves. What do they do on those particular days when they are not in work now?—I have not ascertained that from them; but when I expressed that opinion I meant this:—That if a man knew when he was going down the mine that he was coming out at the end of eight hours, or would be on the bank again in eight hours, he would go more freely to his work than he does at the present time, and I believe he would come out of the work less physically exhausted than at the present time.

5233. Although he has worked harder?—I do not say that he would work harder. I have not admitted that yet; and that he would be both in a physical and mental condition to enjoy social intercourse and improve himself mentally and morally. I believe, taking all these things into consideration, that the men under the eight hours system from bank to bank would attend to their work much more regularly than they do at present.

5234. Do you think they would be prepared to work 48 hours per week, for instance?—Would they be prepared to work 48 hours per week from bank to bank?

5235. That is six days of eight hours. I am asking your opinion upon that?—I do not exactly grasp the question.

5236–7. I am sorry that I cannot put the question more clearly; perhaps the Chairman will put it to you.

Mr. *Dale.*

Sir William Lewis has asked you whether it is your opinion that if the hours from bank to bank were reduced to eight; you are of opinion that the men in your district would work forty-eight hours per week?—Am I in giving an answer to that question to understand Sir William to mean this; would the men be willing to work under a law which would compel them to work forty-eight hours per week and nothing less?

Sir *William Lewis.*

5238. I will ask you that question afterwards as well as the other; but perhaps you will allow me to have the answer to the first question, and I will ask you that afterwards?—If you ask that question, I say no; they would not be tied down by Act of Parliament to work forty-eight hours per week and nothing less.

5239. No is the answer to my second question; please give me an answer to the first now?—Well, in my opinion, if there was an Act of Parliament passed limiting the hours of labour to eight hours from bank to bank, and that was the system adopted in the district, the men would on the whole loyally abide by it; and as I have already said, they would more faithfully carry out that system than they do the nine hours or the 9½ hours.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

5240. Now, we have the opinion of Mr. Onions and not any question that you have put to the men; you are not committing the men now?—I am not; that is my opinion.

5241. What would you suggest in the event of their not falling in with what is a reasonable thing?—What would I suggest as a remedy?

5242. Yes?—To compel them to work 48 hours per week.

5243. Yes. Granted that they get what they want, and they do not fulfil their part of the obligation?—Well, I think they are the best judges as to whether it is necessary to work 48 hours per week.

5244. Then they are to be the sole judges, the owners are to be bound on the one hand not to carry on their operations beyond eight hours per day: but there is no obligation on the men on the other hand to go to the colliery at all?—In that respect it would not alter the position of the owners from what it is at the present time.

5245. Do you mean to suggest that it is no alteration for the owners, assuming that either they agreed, or had it imposed by Act of Parliament to alter the hours from nine to eight, that would not entitle them to have some undertaking from the men that they would work regularly eight hours?—I do not think it would no more than you do now under the eight hours or the 9½ hours from bank to bank.

5246. The movement is initiated by the men and not the owners?—Yes.

5247. I cannot say that the owners are satisfied at present, but it is not for them to ask; it is not they who are asking for the change?—Well, I say I express the opinion again, that if the hours were reduced in my district to eight hours from bank to bank, the men would more regularly attend their work than they do at present for the reason I have already given, and what I say is this: in answer to your other question, if that opinion is a correct one, well then, under the eight hours system, the greater regularity of work, if I am right in expressing that opinion on behalf of the men, would be all the better for the employer, if it is prejudicial for him to have them out at the present time.

5248. Are you of opinion that it is not prejudicial?—I believe that it is prejudicial to the employer for the men to neglect their work; oh yes.

5249. My question was more with reference to the effect of the eight hours as compared with the nine hours. Would you consider it more advantageous to the owner of the colliery to have his capital lying idle for 16 hours out of the 24 hours, while his expense of maintaining the colliery would be increased more than under the present system?—If the figures that I have worked out are correct, they prove just the contrary to what you say, inasmuch as the output per man per annum would be more, or is more in the short hours district than in the long hours district.

5250. Will you allow me to put the question in this way. Assume for a moment that the

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

effect of the introduction of the eight hours would be a permanent increase in the cost of getting coal in this country, would you think that an advantage to the country in general or not?—Of course I do not admit the assumption; if it were a correct one then of course it must increase the cost; but I do not admit the assumption at all.

5251. Would you, under such circumstances, assuming that you could be satisfied that it would increase the cost, recommend the men in your district to insist upon an eight hours' shift?—I would advise them to go in for the eight hours' shift.

5252. Regardless of the effect?—Regardless of the cost. I think that life is before cost and the commodity must be raised to meet that in order to increase the safety of the mine and be conducive to the welfare of the miners as a whole.

5253. Then about the earnings in your district, will you tell us what you can upon that point?—What men do you refer to?

5254. Colliers?—Hewers.

5255. Yes?—Well that is a very difficult question to answer again. We have never taken any steps to ascertain the average earnings of the colliers in the district.

5256. Could you tell us the best and the average of the poorest?—I could not inasmuch as we have not taken any.

5257. You mix among the men and never ask a question as to what their earnings are?—I mix among them and they are often asked a question with regard to the earnings, but if I were to base an opinion as to the average earnings on that I might be led astray and give an incorrect answer.

5258. Do you propose when you fill in the returns that you have undertaken to fill in to give us that information?—I will endeavour to do it. I will try to ascertain or endeavour to do it.

5259. Would it be right in suggesting to you that the earnings of a very large number of your colliers vary from 10*s.* to 11*s.* per day worked?—I should say that that would be incorrect.

5260. Then you will satisfy yourself as to whether my assumption is a right one?—I will. I know that it is very far above the average of what has been shown to me by the employers in one particular colliery: but still it is not for me to give the information of the employer, but I saw what he produced and I have no reason to disbelieve him as to what was the average earnings of a man in the colliery, and it is very far below the figure that you have given in.

5261. When was that?—When the 57½ per cent. was on the standard I believe. I am not absolutely sure, but it is not very long ago.

5262. Was that the earnings per week?—Per day.

5263. Per day worked?—Per day worked.

5264. Will you tell us the name of the colliery?—Abercarn.

5265. Perhaps you will also tell us what it was?—What the average earnings were?

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

5266. Yes, per day worked for the collier?—I believe in one seam it was about 7*s.* 9*d.* or 7*s.* 8*d.*; in the other seams about 1*d.* higher—there was very little difference.

5267. You are now giving an average?—Yes, an average.

Mr. *Dale.*

5268. Over what period?—Very recently.

5269. Over what period was the average taken?—About three months.

Sir *William Lewis.*

5270. It is only fair for me to tell you that the return at that particular colliery is very different to what you said, but you are speaking from memory?—Yes, I am speaking from memory, of course referring to the colliers alone as I understand it—the hewers.

5271. I asked for the hewers. Of course there are men earning 3*s.* a day, and the percentage?—A great number of men.

5272. Plus 57½ per cent.?—Plus 53¾ per cent. now.

5273. Now?—Yes.

5274. Are you able to tell the Commission whether the colliers in that district have earned better wages under the Sliding Scale Committee than they ever did previously?—Do you mean a higher average per day; am I to understand the question in that way?

5275. Yes?—Well, I have not had sufficient experience; my experience is not of sufficient length in the district to give an authentic answer to that question perhaps. I would rather not answer, but would leave that to older hands than myself.

5276. Then as to your answers about inexperienced workmen, what steps have you taken to ascertain the number of inexperienced workmen in your district?—We have not taken any steps.

5277. I will take first the members of your own federation, are any of them inexperienced?—I do not know; I could not answer the question.

5278. Then what steps have you taken to ascertain the number of inexperienced men who are working in collieries in your district?—I have not given the number of inexperienced men.

5279. But you have spoken of a large number?—I said that in my opinion there was a large number of inexperienced men; of impracticable, inexperienced colliers cutting coal in the district, and I based that opinion upon this fact: that from my own personal experience as a collier, and I have been working in and about mines all the time, or rather as a check weigher, since this new Act came into force, since 1887, I do not see any difference whatever between now and before the Act was passed. Then I also said that I had been informed by the officials of a certain colliery that they had called men out of the mine who had represented themselves as qualified and competent according to the Act as colliers: they had actually sent them out of the

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

mine after they had represented themselves thus, for the very reason that they could not cut the coal, and the way in which they went about their work proved to the officials that they were not practical and experienced men.

5280. That is the only ground for the statement you make as to there being a large number of colliers in your district who are inexperienced?—I take it that what is at this particular colliery must also prevail at other collieries, and I also say that the 39th general rule is inadequate for the simple reason that there is no provision made to apply the Act.

5281. Does your duty as check weigher embrace any service underground which would enable you to see whether these men were experienced or otherwise?—It does not.

5282. So that from seeing the men on the bank, and judging of their appearance you tell the Commission here that a very large number of the colliers at the particular pit, where you are check weigher, are inexperienced colliers?—I do not see any difference in the putting on of the men or the taking off of them, to what there was before the Act passed, and as I have already said there are no means of finding out, beyond taking their bare word, whether or not the men are really competent and qualified according to the Act.

5283. Has there been a large accession of new men into the colliery where you are a check weigher?—A large accession since when—since what date?

5284. Say the last three years?—Yes, there has been a considerable accession of men.

5285. How many?—I could not give a definite number.

5286. During what period of the three years were they?—There will probably be 400 or 500 more men employed there now than what there were three or four years ago; I am giving it to you simply offhand; I am not asking you to take that as being definite.

5287. Now, I would ask you to reconsider that answer before it goes on the notes?—In my opinion that is not far from being correct. There has been one pit which is all on the same pit top, and some of the coal comes up the same shaft, only it is another seam, which has been wholly developed during the time I have spoken of, and there are now employed about some 200 or 300 men there. I was embracing that number when I answered your question.

5288. Have you assumed that the whole of these men are men who were not engaged in colliery operations before?—I have not assumed that at all.

5289. During what period of time were these men taken on—the first year of the three?—Gradually; it was a gradual increase.

5290. Is it possible that some of these men are now qualified men?—That some of the men are now qualified.

5291. Yes, those men who have gone in during the last three years, as you say there are men going in?—Of course if a man went into the colliery three years ago, and he is in the colliery

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

to-day, he must be qualified according to the Act, that is to say if he has been working in and about the face of the mine.

5292. Now what is the custom in that particular colliery, as I suppose you know that better than others, when a strange man goes to the colliery and asks for employment?—He has to fill in a note; I believe that is a copy (*handing in a printed form*).

Mr. *Dale.*

Just read it out, please.

The *Witness.*

"Prince of Wales Colliery, Abercarn.

Date ( ).
Where were you last employed? ( ).
Have you been employed here before? ( ).
If so in what district? ( ).
How long have you been a collier? ( ).
Age? ( ).
Residence? ( ).
Married or single? ( ).
Are you a timberman? ( ).
Have you been doing much repairs underground? ( ).
Signature."

Sir *William Lewis.*

5293. What additional precaution would you suggest that the owners should take to ascertain the qualification of a man before he is employed?—I do not suggest that they should take any additional precautions to that, but what I say is this, that the owner and the men also have in many instances, unless they know the man personally, to take his word as to whether or not he is telling the truth when he fills this note in.

5294. Do you suggest that the Welsh colliers are in the habit of making false returns before they are engaged as colliers at any colliery; is that what you wish to suggest to the Commission?—I do not suggest anything of the kind; I simply tell you this fact, if it be a fact, which has been given to me as a fact by the officials of a certain colliery, that after employing men who have filled that note in or a similar note, they have gone down the pit and found the men to be altogether incompetent and impracticable, and they have sent them out of the pit simply because they were a source of danger to themselves and their fellow men. What I would say with regard to the law, if you will allow me on that point, is that it should be made as difficult as possible to evade, and as easy as possible to comply with. It seems to me now to be the other way about.

5295. Putting a man on his honour is not sufficient in Wales?—I am not going to answer that question; my opinion and my experience of the Welsh colliers is tolerably favourable in general.

5296. Now, I will assume that that form is returned to the effect that a man has not been engaged as a collier before; what is the practice in that particular colliery with such men?—If the man has not been engaged?

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

5297. Yes, supposing he fills in the return that he has not been engaged before?—And he says he has not been engaged?

5298. And he says so; what is the practice in that particular colliery with such a man?—The practice varies, sometimes he goes as a labourer, sometimes he goes to work with a practical and experienced man, sometimes he goes to do one kind of work, and sometimes to do another.

5299. But what is the rule; is the rule not when a man has—— ?—I do not think there is any general rule.

5300. No general rule to put him with an experienced man, when he states on the face of his paper that he has had no previous experience in colliery work?—I did not say that.

5301. Well, I ask you, is not that the general rule followed in the collieries?—I answered the question once that sometimes they put them to do labouring work, sometimes they send them with a practical and experienced man, sometimes they go to do one work, sometimes they go to do another kind of work.

5302. And the labouring work is with experienced workmen?—No, not always; they work by themselves very often.

Mr. *Dale.*

5303. In such a case as Sir William Lewis has put to you, that is, where a man seeking employment has made a declaration on the face of the form submitted to him, showing that he is not an experienced collier, is it your experience that he would then be set to work contrary to the provisions of the Act?—Oh, no, not at all. In referring to that particular colliery I did not say that, and I did not wish to insinuate it either.

Sir *William Lewis.*

5304. But have you sufficient knowledge of the general practice of the district to tell the Commission what is the usual course pursued when a man applies for work at a colliery, and he makes a declaration that he has had no previous experience?—I have replied as to that one particular colliery.

Mr. *Dale.*

Would you not be satisfied, Sir William, to take that last answer, which I understand to be that it is not within his experience that any man declaring himself to be inexperienced within the provisions of the Act is set to work in a manner contrary to those provisions.

Sir *William Lewis.*

I will accept that answer.

The *Witness.*

What I wish to emphasize to the Commission is this; that after the manager has done his best, and after the workman has done his best to get the Act complied with, it is very often evaded for the simple reason that it is very easy

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

to evade, and it is very difficult to have it complied with. That is what I have to complain of the rule, and what my district has to complain of the rule chiefly, and we have discussed the question thoroughly.

5305. And it is the men you consider who are to blame in this matter, is it?—I do not say they are always to blame. I do not say "the men." If a man comes from an agricultural district, and represents himself to be a collier, that is not the men, that is a man from some other trade, and some other calling, and some other district; it is not a collier; it is not an experienced and practical collier.

5306. But still a man?—He is a man.

5307. And that man you blame?—Yes, certainly I would blame him.

5308. Now what remedy would you suggest for it assuming it to be anything more than a very exceptional case?—Assuming it to be that.

5309. Yes?—I do not assume it to be anything of the kind; I believe it must be practised in general, as I say.

5310. Very well, I will take your own words?—I would suggest that a certificate of competency should be given to a person after he has complied with the Act; after he has made himself competent according to the Act, showing that he is competent.

5311. How is that to be ascertained; who is to be the judge?—There is more than one way perhaps in which it can be done, I have not thought out any particular way, but I believe a means could be provided at a colliery if you like. I think it could be worked in this way; a body of persons composed of so many, an equal number from each side, let that be a board if you like, or a committee, or a body of persons who shall be empowered to give to every person at this colliery this certificate of competency after he has satisfied such a body that he is entitled to it.

5312. Why should this be necessary as regards collieries more than anything else; do you consider that there is such an amount of difficulty and mystery about acquiring the art of a collier now any more than there was in the past?—We want to improve upon the past; there is no more mystery about it than there was in the past, but what I am seeking to do, and what I take it my colleagues are seeking to do, and my fellow men are seeking to do, is to improve upon the past. We are not satisfied with the past condition of things.

5313. And you think it practically necessary that a collier should serve an apprenticeship?—Yes, I do.

5314. From the short experience you have had in South Wales that is the conclusion you have arrived at?—From the experience I have had in South Wales and in North Staffordshire as a collier—my general experience as a collier.

5315. There is one question I omitted to ask you with reference to the hours. Is it the custom in your district to have an interval for meals in the middle of the day?—It just depends upon what class of persons you refer to.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

5316. Take any class you like. My question is a general one; you can qualify your answer as you think it right?—The hewers do not take any mealtime beyond what they can snap, when there is an opportune time presenting itself. The repairers and the labourers I believe do take their half hour a day or hour, whatever the stipulated time may be.

5317. What about the pit itself; does the pit cease winding for any time?—In some instances it does and in some it does not. At Abercarn and Risca it does not stop at all. I believe at Ebbw Vale they stop 20 minutes, and I am not quite sure about Tredegar. At some places the mine stops, and at some it does not.

5318. And the colliers, in your experience then, do not meet together and have a meal now as they did formerly?—Not the hewers. There is no stipulated time.

5319. I am not asking about a stipulated time. Do they or do they not cease working and have a meal together?—They must cease work; they take "snap" with them, they take food with them, and they generally eat that food before they come to bank again.

5320. Has your attention been at all called to the class of men who, as a rule, suffer from accident from falls of roof; whether they are the older and more experienced or the young men, or what you would describe as inexperienced men?—It has not; I have not ascertained that.

5321. You have never inquired?—I have not.

5322. Whether colliers as they become more experienced become more daring, and work on under a roof more subject to accident than new men would?—I have not; from my experience I should say that that would not be so.

5323. So that the records of the coroners of the districts would not be consistent with your opinion then?—It would not exactly tally with it I expect if what you say is the opinion or the returns of the coroners of the districts.

5324. Can you tell us what the colliers pay for house coal?—Yes; in some places. It varies, but I think I may give a general statement and say that they pay about half the market value, or a little over half the market value.

5325. Over or under?—Over generally.

5326. Take the last two years?—That would not be fair.

5327. I am asking for the last two years?—Well, the last two years they undoubtedly have not paid half, but if you take the two years before that, or when the wages were low, they would be paying more than half.

5328. With your assumed knowledge of the cost of the raising of coal, would you say that the owners were losing 5*s.* per ton upon the coal that they supply to the workman?—I would not.

5329. How much?—Well, that would vary according to the price of the coal, inasmuch as the house coal of the collier does not rise and fall with the wages, nor consequently with the rise and fall of the production of the colliery.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

5330. So that if the coal cost to put on the bank 9*s.* per ton, and the collier gets the coal delivered to him for 5*s.* or 6*s.* the owner loses 3*s.* or 4*s.* per ton upon every ton the collier has?—That would be so upon that assumption.

5331. Now, you complained of the treatment of men working night shifts?—I did.

5332. Do you remember, in Monmouthshire, when men had to work six shifts if they were paid six shifts?—I remember where they had to do it at some collieries, and some collieries where they did not.

5333. But ultimately there was a general concession made that men working five nights got paid one night when they were in bed?—A very short night.

5334. Is that so or not?—It is not accurate.

5335. Well, what is accurate?—This, that——

5336. Please to give us how many hours a man works from Monday until Saturday, and for which he gets paid six turns?—50.

5337. Please to give us each night?—Each night?

5338. Yes; Monday night?—There is no variation at some of the collieries. On Monday night, from 7 to 5, and the same all the week through.

5339. Then if a man is paid for six nights, is he not paid for one night when he is in bed?—He works 10 hours the five nights he works.

5340. That may be; I am asking for the shifts. They are shifts of 10 hours, and you are now asking that in the event of a man being absent even one of those five shifts he should not have it deducted: do you think that is reasonable?—I do think it is reasonable for night work. I think a man should be paid extra for night work over and above what he is paid for day work.

5341. Is that general in other trades in that particular district; take tinplate works and iron and steel works?—It is probably not general in other trades; it is nevertheless in my opinion a very just thing.

5342. For colliers?—Yes, or for anyone else.

Mr. *Abraham.*

5343. You are the secretary of the Colliers Committee at Abercarn Colliery?—Yes.

5344. As well as being secretary of the Federation?—Yes, I am the joint secretary with my colleague.

5345. As such, you call and attend all the meetings, as a rule, held by the men?—I do, with very few exceptions.

5346. In addition to that you have frequent joint meetings with Risca Colliery?—Yes.

5347. You are taking, I understand, a very leading place among the men in the district?—I suppose I am, if it would not be egotism for me to say it.

5348. So that in addition to your own experience and your own knowledge of these things, you have every advantage of knowing what are the opinions of the men you represent?—I have.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

5349. Any grievance that they have is brought to the committee and to the meeting held in your presence?—Yes.

5350. Any complaints as to the employment of inexperienced men and so forth are brought there and discussed?—Yes.

5351. So that by these means you have full opportunities of knowing exactly the opinion of the men in that vicinity upon those matters?—I have full opportunities as described by you.

5352. And having used those opportunities you say here that it is the opinion of the men that you have given upon most of these questions, and not your own?—I do.

5353. Then with respect to ascertaining the views of the men upon the hours question, have you taken the same means of ascertaining their views upon that question as are generally taken upon all other questions?—We have, excepting as I said that in some cases at some collieries we even went further than the general means we adopt by getting the signatures of the men upon the eight hours' question at some collieries.

5354. In great crises upon questions between employers and workmen, such as we have at the present moment about re-arranging the sliding scale, what are the means taken to ascertain the views of the men upon those questions?—The means taken in the past have been meetings called, duly convened meetings, and at the meetings the questions have been discussed and decided by show of hands.

5355. And delegates sent to where?—And delegates sent to represent the views of the men at the place wherever the meeting may be called.

5356. And at those meetings representatives of a general character are selected to see the employers?—Yes, just so.

5357. And the views of the men through that source are always accepted?—That is so.

5358. Have you taken similar means to ascertain their views upon the hours question?—We have taken similar means, and as I have stated we have gone further in that case, and we got the signatures of the men at some collieries.

5359. I think you said that the double shift was worked at one colliery that you worked in in Monmouthshire?—Yes.

5360. What became of it, how long did it exist?—About 12 months, as far as I remember, at this particular colliery that I worked at. I could not say how long it was in vogue altogether, it may have been in vogue some two or three years.

5361. Who was it that stopped it?—The employers; not the men.

5362. Could you give us the reasons?—The reasons that I heard them express were that they could not keep the roads open.

Mr. *Dale.*

5363. Will you tell us exactly what were the shifts, the number of hours, and so on at that colliery?—From 6 to 2 and from 2 to 10, the two coal shifts, the two hewers shifts, and from 10 to 6 the repairing shift.

Mr. *Abraham.*

5364. So that after all that was not the double shift as it is known to be worked in the North of England by an hour and a half or rather more in the length of time?—Of course the hours were longer in those double shifts than they are in the North, as I understand the North hours.

5365. They worked two shifts of eight hours at the coal?—Yes.

5366. Were those two shifts from bank to bank or from face to face?—From face to face; we were supposed to be down by 6 and not to commence to come up before 2.

5367. Then what would it mean from bank to bank?—That depends. There were two collieries in operation at the time; at one colliery that would mean longer than at the other, inasmuch as it was further in in the one colliery than it was in the other. At the one colliery from bank to bank would mean between 8½ hours and nine hours, and at the other colliery about 8¼ hours.

5368. Are there any special reasons why it is more difficult to keep the roads open in the same time in the collieries of Monmouthshire and South Wales than it is in the North of England?—There is no doubt that probably the strata in South Wales are of a more brittle nature and consequently take more repairing.

5369. Have you read the report of the Royal Commission upon Accidents in Mines upon this matter?—I do not think I have, except abstracts. I do not think I have read it through.

5370. Have you read any abstract from that report upon this very question?—I do not remember now sufficiently clearly to give an answer.

5371. Are you aware that the Commission has given it as their opinion that the same system of working could not be pursued exactly in South Wales as in other districts for that reason?—I am not aware of that inasmuch as my memory does not serve me clearly enough upon that point; that is my impression, and it is probable that I have got it from the report. The impression I have is that the nature of the strata in South Wales and Monmouthshire is more brittle and more difficult to deal with than it is in the North of England in general. That is the impression I have in my mind and it is probable that it is from that source that I have that impression.

5372. Then you could not say from reading the report?—I do not remember now. I have got the impression from somewhere.

Mr. *Fowler.*

Had we not better have the actual recommendation of the Royal Commission upon Accidents in Mines placed before us?

Mr. *Dale.*

I think that would be the proper course.

Mr. *Abraham.*

5373. I submit to you ruling sir, hoping that we will have some opportunity of having the

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

recommendations of that Commission brought before this Committee. (*To the witness.*) You know from your own experience that there is a considerable difference between the strata in Monmouthshire and South Wales and the strata in North Staffordshire?—Yes, I do. I know that from personal experience.

5374. Which makes it more difficult to keep the roads open in the same time?—Yes, it does, no doubt.

5375. And it gives a very good and strong reason for the number of accidents which we have from falls of roofs and sides in that district?—There is no doubt that is one reason in my opinion.

5376. Is there another reason?—Why there are more accidents in South Wales and Monmouthshire.

5377. Yes, why the accidents from falls of roofs and sides are so much more numerous in Monmouthshire and South Wales than they are in other parts of the country—do you know of any additional reason for that?—Yes, the lengthened hours and the unskilled labour.

5378. Now, what has been your experience with respect to the working of the double turn, because really that is what it means after all in that district; has it not been that the employers were anxious to put every man possible on in the second shift, and up to the same number as they employed in the first shift?—Certainly, they have been very anxious to do that and are anxious wherever it is in vogue; it is not in vogue at many places.

5379. So that really with the difficulties that you have explained the time left was considered to be too small to keep the roads in proper order?—That is so I believe.

5380. Then another point: though the double shift may be the means of having fewer men in at the same time, still working the double turn would increase eventually the number of men in the same 24 hours?—Certainly.

5381. With respect to the putting up of timber, cogs and props—cogs and double timbers especially there was a remark made by Sir William Lewis—who is it that gives the orders for these to be put up?—The overman or the fireman.

5382. Has the collier the right of putting up a cog or a pair of timbers unless he is first ordered by the fireman or the overman?—He has not as far as I know the district.

5383. Then, unless it was necessary and a necessity attended to by the order of either of these two officials if the men were idle for want of trams all day he could not put them up?—No, not unless he had the orders, if he did he would not be paid for it; consequently he never puts them up; he would rather go out first as a rule.

5384. Then as to the employment of labourers and unskilled workmen, as labourers, what do they do generally?—Stow rubbish and sometimes, not in all cases, but in some few cases, they assist a timber man to fill his rubbish in.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

5385. They are employed as stowers of rubbish then?—Yes.

5386. Where is this rubbish stowed?—In old stall roads and in old headings which are finished.

5387. As a rule are the old stall roads and old headings which are finished safe places?—They are the most dangerous places in the colliery as a rule.

5388. The most dangerous?—The most dangerous in the colliery as a rule, in a fiery seam.

5389. And still it is there where these labourers are very frequently employed?—Yes, the labourers; that is it.

5390. If there is an accumulation of gas in in a colliery is it more likely to be anywhere else than in an old stall or an old forsaken heading?—It is more likely to be there where the ventilation is very slack, of course.

5391. And is there where these inexperienced men and labourers are frequently employed?—That is so.

5392. What is your complaint against the general rule, the 39th rule?—My complaint is that there is no provision made in it for its application.

Mr. *Fowler.*

5393. Its enforcement?—Its enforcement.

Mr. *Abraham.*

5394. Have you any complaint to make against the working of it?—Yes.

5395. Were you one of the deputation which waited upon the inspectors of the district with respect to it?—I was.

5396. What was the opinion given by them as to the meaning of this rule; what rendering did they give to it?—Mr. Martin and I believe Mr. Robson and Mr. Bain agreed with him—I am sure they did at the time—that the rendering of the rule or the letter of the rule was that although one inexperienced person could not be employed until he had been two years under the supervision of skilled workmen, yet two inexperienced persons could work together.

5397. That was their view?—That was how Mr. Martin (and Mr. Robson and Mr. Bain agreed with him) interpreted the meaning of the rule.

5398. Was it their view that if a case were taken under that rule that would be the decision of the courts?—That was so. That is what I understood Mr. Martin to say.

5399. Who is it as a rule who employs men at the collieries?—The officials of course, the manager generally has the veto as to whether a man shall be employed or not.

5400. Do you not know cases where the men are employed by the overman?—There is no doubt that at some collieries that is in vogue while at others after the overman has set him on he generally gets the sanction of the manager or the under manager.

5401. Generally what is your experience upon this point of employment; who in your experience

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

employs the most men, the overman or the manager?—My experience as a collier was that the overman employed most of the men, but I refer now to Abercarn Colliery in particular.

5402. I am not asking you about Abercarn, with all due respect, although of course you know more about Abercarn than any other colliery; but generally throughout your district what is your experience?—I have not taken any steps to ascertain that information—not generally.

5403. In your own experience?—My own experience when I was a collier was that——

Mr. *Dale.*

Your own experience need not be confined to the time when you were a collier; "experience" would include present observation.

Mr. *Abraham.*

5404. Your own knowledge and observation?—Of course it is the overman they go to in many instances, and it is the overman who employs them.

5405. Then if the overman does employ a number of inexperienced men, is there any provision in the law whatever to call him to account for it?—Certainly; the onus is on the manager I take it.

5406. Is there not a provision to relieve the manager, unless he is personally responsible?—Certainly.

5407. We had better have that on the notes.—Will you kindly read section 65?—"No "prosecution shall be instituted against the "owner, agent, manager, or under-manager of "a mine for any offence under this Act not "committed personally by such owner, agent, "manager, or under-manager, which can be "prosecuted before a court of summary juris-"diction, except by an inspector or with the "consent in writing of the Secretary of State."

5408. That is another point. So the men cannot enter a case against the employers in such a case as that without having the consent of the inspector or of the Secretary of State?—Yes.

5409. Do you think that the law needs to be strengthened upon that point?—I do.

5410. So as to bring the man who actually committed the breach of the law under the law?—I do.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

5411. Then one question more. If the time lost now in full days here and there during the month, or the 12 months were proportionately divided daily in a scheme of reduction of hours as you propose, do you think that would tend to bring the men to pay more attention to their work?—I do.

5412. And to be more regular at their work?—I do.

Mr. *Austin.*

5413. Is the employment of unskilled labourers in Monmouthshire and South Wales on the increase or decrease?—There is no doubt that of late it has been on the increase—during these last two years.

5414. What would be the wages of the unskilled labourer going to the mine at first?—At the present time?

5415. Yes?—About 3*s.*

Mr. *Abraham.*

5416. Plus?—Plus 53¾ per cent. at the present time and in some cases more; but that would be the general percentage.

Mr. *Austin.*

5417. From where do these unskilled labourers come?—We take it that they generally come from the agricultural districts, and I know from personal knowledge that a great many of them do come from there.

5418. What agricultural districts?—Generally Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Devonshire and Herefordshire as a rule into Monmouthshire.

5419. Do you know the wages of the agricultural labourers in those districts?—I understand they are very low, 11*s.*, 12*s.*, and 14*s.*

Mr. *Hewlett.*

5420. Are you aware that any offence against the general rules is punishable under the Act?—I am.

5421. Is that not a means of enforcing the rule?—We have to find it out before we can enforce it.

5422. Did it not occur to you that that is a sufficient means of enforcing the rule?—It is not, in my opinion.

5423. Why?—Why; because we want to ascertain in the first place whether the rule has been broken.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. THOMAS RICHARDS called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

5424. What is exactly your official relationship to the South Wales and Monmouthshire Colliery Workmen's Federation?—I am an agent for a section of the Monmouthshire miners and general secretary of the whole of

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

the Miners' Federation of South Wales and Monmouthshire, Mr. Onions being secretary of the Monmouthshire district of that federation.

5425. You have of course heard the evidence of Mr. Onions?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

5426. May we take it that you agree generally with the views that he has expressed?—Yes, generally I do.

5427. Is there any point on which you desire to supplement his evidence?—There are one or two points, with your permission, which I would like to supplement, and also one or two new points I would like to deal with.

5428. If you please?—Of course I agree with Mr. Onions being a member of the Sliding Scale Committee, with that form of regulation of wages, but I should like to emphasize the one defect more particularly in that arrangement—that is the want of an umpire in settling questions of disputes; because we believe that if it is not now it will be of vital importance to insure the success of any arrangement of the kind. We have come to that conclusion, having lately submitted a matter in dispute which came before that board to two of the gentlemen who are members of this Commission, and who are also the chairman and vice-chairman of the committee, and whom we consider in South Wales to be two of the ablest men that we could have to represent the two particular interests. Those gentlemen having failed to agree over the question and to settle it, it has resulted in a strike of miners, that strike being carried on at the present time.

5429. Do you mean that the men are out at the present time?—The men are out on strike at the present time owing to their failure to settle the matter. Then, also, we have a good deal of complaint with respect to the black listing in connexion with that particular strike. Lots of men have gone from that colliery to other districts to seek employment, lots of them have had employment, and after having had employment they have been dismissed at a minute's notice; they were told that it had been found out that they came from that particular colliery, and that they could not allow them to work there. So I should like to emphasize the opinion of Mr. Onions and the opinion of the miners generally, I believe, who are regulated by a sliding scale as to the necessity of an umpire to settle matters of dispute. I also agree with respect to the need for additional mining inspectors, besides those we have now for Monmouthshire, because we believe that they are not equal to the amount of work that they are supposed to perform. On the question of unskilled labour, I also agree with what has been said with respect to the importing of unskilled labour into the mines of Monmouthshire, and I would like to add my experience in a large section of the district as to what in some places is the cause of a good deal of these unskilled workmen being taken into our mines, that is a system that we have at a good number of collieries in the district, of letting out the repairing of the roads, say, and whole districts of coal, to sub-contractors. These men generally or in a good number of instances employ workmen, and they simply go and tell the overman or fireman that they have done so, and they take them in the colliery, they are supposed in

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

a good many instances to exercise a supervision over a dozen, 20, 30, 40, and sometimes even 50 workmen themselves.

5430. Who are they who exercise a supervision over 40 or 50?—The sub-contractors. Of course they are generally appointed or get these contracts through being practical miners. Some of those say that they comply with the Act when they exercise a supervision over ten or a dozen men. We say that it is practically impossible for those to exercise a supervision over that number of men, so that those men should acquire the necessary amount of ability under the Act to be called practical workmen in two years. Not only in our own district have I knowledge of this system being in existence, but in several other districts in South Wales and Monmouthshire owing to my being the general secretary of our Federation. We have several times had this question under discussion at the executive council meetings, where representatives of all the sections of the Federation in South Wales and Monmouthshire usually meet to transact their business, and the complaint is general through the whole of the districts represented on our Federation that there are a good number of unskilled workmen imported into our mines. I do not attempt to impute more than Mr. Onions did that the managers or overmen do not possibly do their best in a great number of instances to find out whether the men looking for work are practical men or not, but what we complain of is the inadequacy of the rule as at present constituted to render their requirements anything like a preventive to the unskilled men going in. I was also present at the meeting where the Mines Inspectors of South Wales and Monmouthshire gave the rendering or the interpretation rather, of the 39th general rule dealing with this question. Mr. Onions said that there were a good number of men working longer hours than the stipulated hours in our district, longer than the nine hours that we are supposed to work or supposed to be down the pit. We attribute that in a good many instances to this system of sub-contracting. We have contractors at some of the collieries who are not only contractors in the mine, but they keep grocers' shops, and drapers' shops, and public houses, and in a good many instances where the longer hours are worked in collieries, within my own particular notice a sub-contractor in order to induce the men to do an hour's work after the other men have gone out, will sometimes tell them that if they will do so he will take them and stand treat to a few jugs of beer appealing to their baser nature, I suppose, in order to secure a greater amount of profit out of them. That is very often done. These men are taken and stood some beer when going from their work, and very often that beer prevents their going to work on the following day, which not only results ultimately in a loss to the workmen, but results in a loss to the owner as well. We say it would be beneficial if sub-contracting were done away with altogether in our mines and every man was immediately employed

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

under the owner of a mine. Those are the points on which I agree with Mr. Onions. Also, I agree with him on the question of the eight hours. I say that the means we have taken to ascertain from our men their opinion upon these eight hours have been the same means that have always or invariably been adopted with us to know their opinions and wishes on all other questions, no matter how important; and that so far we in our district have never had a counter proposition proposed at any of our meetings against the resolution asking for a legal eight hours working day from bank to bank. Then the strike which Mr. Onions told you about, that is to say, the only strike of any importance in our district for a number of years, was a strike affecting about 2,000 working men, which took place in August 1887, and continued for a period of seven weeks. These men were not members of any Trades Union in the proper meaning of the term as we understand it nowadays, that is, a Union to render financial support in case of strikes. They were members of what is called the National Union which is in existence I think chiefly in Northumberland and Durham, they had for a little time been members of that association. The association which Mr. Burt is connected with as President I believe was the association that these men had joined, previous to their joining that association I think they had been for a good number of years having no connection with any association at all, had practically been altogether non-union men. The number affected as I said was about 2,000 men, and not being in connection with any Trades Union whose rules guaranteed financial support in case of a strike, they had to live on a very little amount of money for the seven weeks, I think the whole amount would not come to about a thousand pounds distributed amongst 2,000 men for seven weeks.

5431. Were they not members of your association?—I was not myself at that time; I was one of those men, and practically we belonged to this National Union, and not to any Federation.

5432. Did your Federation not exist then?—It did exist in the other parts of Monmouthshire and in the other districts of South Wales, but these men were not members of it. There were two or three causes of the strike, but the chief cause was that the men suffered considerably under a system of making deductions for slag or shale sent out in the coal. The employers had an arrangement which governed the deductions to be made for slag which I should like to put in for the information of the Commission, both as it existed then and as it improved at the termination of the strike, because with the latest improvement we do not consider that the arrangement is what it ought to be, and we say that Parliament could assist us in making it better if they withdrew the permission given in the Mines Act for the employers and workmen entering into an arrangement which should govern the deductions for slag or shale. We say that it is

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

enough to give the power to the checkweigher, and the owners' weigher, and their power to call in an umpire to decide between them in cases of dispute.

5433. If you wish to put in the owners' rule as it was and the owners' rule as it is, it would perhaps be more convenient to read the two?—That is what I am just going to do. Under the arrangement as it was for making deduction for slag these are the directions given to the machine man at the top of the pit: "For an average of "8 lbs. per tram, or under, charge one-eighth "of a penny per lb. for all slag sent out; for "an average of over 8 lbs. and not over 16 lbs. "charge one farthing per lb.; for over "16 lbs. and not over 24 lbs., charge one "halfpenny per lb. for the whole; and so "on, doubling the price of the whole for every "increase of 8 lbs. in the average. Any collier "sending out more than 24 lbs. of slag in one "tram will be liable to instant dismissal. "Special notice: The weigher each day to "inform the colliery manager without fail of "every instance when the quantity of slag in "any one tram amounts to or exceeds 24 lbs." So you will see that taking a number of trams, say 20 trams in the various scales with 20 lbs. of slag, or an average of a pound per tram, they would charge the collier the eighth of a penny per pound, which would mean 3*d.* to be deducted out of his wages at the end of the week for 20 lbs. of slag sent out in 20 trams of coal, then it would go on at that average of one pound per tram, two lbs. per tram, three lbs. per tram, and up to four lbs. per tram.

5434. You need not go into the detail?—Up to eight lbs. per tram, it would go on an average of the price of one-eighth of a penny per pound, so that if a man in 20 trams sent out 160 lbs., which would be an average of eight lbs. per tram, he would be charged 1*s.* 8*d.*, and there would be 1*s.* 8*d.* deducted from his earnings, but if it went 161 lbs.—and here is where the shoe begins to pinch more particularly—if it went to 161 lbs. in the 20 trams it would mean more than an average of eight lbs. per tram, and then they would charge a $\frac{1}{4}d.$ per lb. for it.

Mr. *Fowler.*

5435. Are you reading what was or what is?—What was.

5436. But it is altered now?—Yes, but you ask in your circular for the cause of the strike.

5437. We understand that there was a dispute (we need not go into all the details) upon the working of this particular rule, and that rule has been altered. You had better now give us the rule as it stands, if you have any complaint to make of it?—The result of the seven weeks strike——

Mr. *Dale.*

5438. You are giving us the rule as it was and then you are going to give us the rule as it is?—I am now coming to that. I want to show you, if you will allow me, that we have

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

had instances which caused this dispute, where the man has worked for a fortnight and has filled his usual amount of coal, but owing to a small amount of slag being sent out with it, the whole of his earnings have been forfeited by way of paying for the slag, and he has been a great number of lbs. in debt at the end of a fortnight.

5439. You are now alluding to the arrangement that was in operation at the time of the strike?—Yes, and I put it in (*handing in a form*).

5440. You said that you were going to tell us what the rule now is?—At the end of the strike I may say that the owners were members of the Sliding Scale Committee although I will not be sure whether the Coal Owners' Association existed at that time. The workmen were also practically represented by the Sliding Scale Committee, although not being in the Miners Association they had never taken any practical interest in the business either in the selection of representatives or of anything else on that Committee. But the Sliding Scale Committee very generally stepped in and offered their services to act as arbitrators, or to appoint arbitrators to act in the settlement of this dispute, which was done. Two of their number sat and agreed to a scale which although a great deal better than the old one is not what we should like it to be. But having submitted the matter to arbitrators, and before doing so agreeing to abide by their decision, so far the men have loyally abided by that. I put in the new scale (*handing in a form*).

5441. We will take it that that is a reduced scale of deductions in respect of impurities?—Yes.

5442. I think perhaps we need not take the detail of it, we are more concerned with the broad general fact that the result of this strike was the appointment—am I right—you will correct me if I am wrong?—Yes.

5443. Was the appointment by the Sliding Scale Committee of two of its number, one representing the employers' interest, and the other that of the employed, and that they went into the matter with the result that the first scale of fines or deductions was superseded by one imposing lighter penalties; is that so?—Yes, that is so exactly.

5444. Did that bring the strike to an end?—That brought the strike to an end.

Mr. *Fowler*.

5445. What month in 1887 was that; was it before or after the passing of the Act?—It was in August.

5446. That was before the Act was passed?—Yes.

5447. The Act does provide for a settlement of dispute in this case, does it not?—No, because the Act leaves it open to an arrangement being entered into between employers and workmen about a scale of deductions, so that that prevents our taking the full advantage of the Act and of the check-weighing clause with respect to the

Mr. *Fowler*—continued.

deductions inasmuch as we have an arrangement.

Mr. *Dale*.

5448. In this case the two members of the Sliding Scale Committee were able to come to an understanding, and the question of an umpire did not then arise?—No, it did not then arise. If they failed of course it would have been equally as important in that dispute as in any other because the strike would not have been ended.

5449. Will you proceed with any other point which you wish to make?—The other point I wish to make is with respect to compensation for accidents, or what is called in South Wales and Monmouthshire the Permanent Fund. After the passing of the Employers' Liability Act this fund was formed in a good number of districts to the injury of the working men and the miners—that is of the thrifty portion of them at least, because the majority of them having made provision by joining friendly societies, both for sickness and accidents, and being compelled either to leave the pits where they were employed or to join the Permanent Fund and contribute to it in a good number of instances, they were not able to keep up all the payments, and they lost their protection in these friendly societies.

5450. Would you please explain a little further what is the designation of the provident society or fund to which you are referring—what is its official name?—The Monmouthshire and South Wales Permanent Relief Fund.

5451. When was it called into existence—when was it created—about?—About 1883, I believe.

5452. Do you say that it is obligatory on every man employed in the collieries of the district to be a member?—Not every man, not at all the collieries, but at a good number of collieries. To say that it is so now possibly would not be right, but when the fund was formed it was made obligatory, it was made a condition of employment. Unless a man joined the fund then he was told he must leave the colliery. Working in the pit at the time I was told personally that unless I joined the Permanent Fund, and I had always considered myself to be a fairly thrifty man, and had made provision for sickness and accidents in friendly societies. I was told unless I joined the fund that I was to leave the pit, and so were all the men under that particular firm which employed something like 2,000 workmen, I believe—more or less—at that time.

5453. To what extent is it obligatory now?—It is obligatory now in the sense that a good number of collieries do not ask a man whether he will subscribe to the fund or not, but they take it for granted and stop his contribution from his first payment. But at this particular place we have been told that if the men do not like to contribute now they can withdraw. Of course, having contributed for a good number of years, and possibly a good number of them never

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

having received any benefit from it, they do not hardly like to withdraw from the fund now, but they would like to have the management of the fund in their own hands.

5454. What proportion of the men's contributions is contributed by the owners?—They contribute 25 per cent. on what the men contribute, and for that 25 per cent. they retain the whole management of the business in their own hands. That is what we complain of chiefly. We do not complain of the fund now. Undoubtedly, if it has injured a few men in the respect that I have stated, it has benefited a greater number of men.

5455. You allude to the matter as desiring to mention the fact that in its initiation or in its earlier years of operation it bore a little hardly upon those men who had already joined other provident societies?—Yes; and that in another respect we do not consider it ought to have been registered as a friendly society, as at present constituted with the whole of the management given to those who subscribe 25 per cent., while those who subscribe 75 per cent. have practically no voice in the matter at all.

Mr. *Fowler.*

5456. You have not said whether they were obliged to contract themselves out of the Act?—I was going to that point. The other point that I wished to mention was that the men were obliged to contract themselves out of the Employers' Liability Act by joining this fund.

5457. Do you mean that it is a condition of employment in certain collieries in South Wales that unless they will subscribe to that fund and contract themselves out of the Employers Liability Act they will not have employment?—That has been so since the formation of the fund until a very recent period, which I believe is caused by possibly the view that the matter would come before this Commission or be otherwise inquired into. We have been told at a good number of those collieries now that if the men wish to withdraw from the fund they can do so. But as I told you, having an interest in the fund, and having subscribed to it for a good number of years and not having received any benefit, it would be hardly fair to ask the men to do so. What we now want is that the Employers' Liability Act should be so amended that the workmen should not be asked to contract out of it, and that the rules of this fund should be amended so as to give the workmen the management and not the owners.

Sir *William Lewis.*

5458. Do you appear here for the workmen in that fund?—Certainly.

5459. Perhaps you will be good enough to put in the rules?—I am sorry that I brought the rules for 1884, I think they have been amended since then, and I must have brought the wrong copy.

Mr. *Dale.*

5460. Will you send a copy of the present rules?—I can send a copy, certainly; but before doing so I should like to call attention to what we complain of in the rules.

5461. We have heard evidence on the subject of the Miners' Provident Society, and much of it was very interesting, but except in its general bearing I think it is probably outside the scope of our inquiry. Of course, we cannot constitute ourselves a court for minutely examining the rules of these various societies, or for hearing all the points on which they may be capable of amendment; I think therefore you must take the matter rather broadly and generally. Up to this point I think you have done so?—In order to prove my contention that the management was in the hands of the employers, I was going to submit the rules.

5462. The rules will explain that point?—Yes.

Sir *William Lewis.*

I want the rules because the witness has alleged what there will be no difficulty in his proving as to the management.

Witness.

You can have this copy of the 1884 rules if you like.

Mr. *Dale.*

5463. I want to know whether you desire the Commission to understand that at present there is practically throughout your district no obligation on the part of the men employed at the collieries to become members of a fund?—No, I do not say that. Practically, it is so, because I believe that a good amount of pressure is being brought to bear upon men to join the fund. Of course, there possibly is not the opposition to it that there was, inasmuch as they applied the pressure until they secured the membership of the whole of the men then employed, and as other men came in they accepted the conditions which then existed at the colliery.

5464. At any rate, what was formerly a rule of employment or a condition of employment, namely, membership of this fund, has ceased to bear that aspect, and although pressure is, as you say, used to induce men to be members of the fund, if a man declined to be a member of the fund he would not necessarily lose his employment?—Not necessarily so, although we believe that at the first opportunity the employers had they would try to get rid of a man holding that opinion as against all the other men who were in the fund.

5465. Is there any other point on which you wish to offer any remark?—No, I do not think there is any other point.

Mr. *Abraham.*

5466. With respect to sub-contracting, do you find that under that system more leniency is given for the employment of unskilled men and of impractical men than where the men are

Mr. *Abraham*—continued

directly employed by the owners through their manager?—I do, because in a good many instances where the sub-contractors are, the sub-contractor puts the men on and simply informs the overman or the manager that he has done so.

5467. Have these sub-contractors any official capacity in a colliery?—No, certainly not.

5468. They are neither overmen nor firemen?—No.

5469. Do you seriously tell the Commission that these men employed their own men?—Yes; but undoubtedly they inform the overman or manager that they have done so, or ask the permission, saying that they have a few men they want to bring in, and they very often take them in without those men having seen the overman or manager.

5470. Have you any personal knowledge of that being done?—Yes, I have.

5471. Has the fact been brought to your personal knowledge?—Yes, it has.

5472. That being so do you not consider that to be a grave infringement of the Mines Act?—Yes, we do consider it so.

5473. I think you also attended the deputation which waited upon the inspectors of the district with respect to the 39th General Rule?—I did.

5474. Do you concur with Mr. Onions' evidence on that point?—Yes, with all that he said on that point.

Sir *William Lewis.*

5475. Will you tell me the name of the colliery or collieries where these sub-contractors are allowed to employ men in the way you have indicated?—Where the sub-contractors employ men in the way I indicated, it is chiefly at the Ebbw Vale Collieries.

5476. Will you tell us the name of each pit where you know that this practice prevails?—One pit called the Waen Llwyd pit.

5477. Where else?—I do not know that it prevails now so extensively at any other pit, but it was so a few years ago, four years ago, when I was working there myself, (I do not think it prevails now so much) at No. 1 pit under the same Company.

5478. Does it or does it not at No. 1 pit prevail now?—I will not be positive now.

5479. Any other?—No, I would not mention any other.

5480. Can you tell me what quantity of coal is raised by contractors at the Waen Llwyd pit?—No, I could not.

5481. Could you give us any idea as to what proportion that is of the total get of the Ebbw Vale Company?—Of the pit itself, of that pit altogether.

5482. No?—No; I could not do that either.

5483. No idea?—I have no idea, but I may say this: This is the largest colliery and employs the largest number of men, and also the largest number of contractors under that company.

5484. What number of men would you say were employed by the sub-contractors at Waen

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

Llwyd?—I could hardly give the figures, but I should say about 200 men.

5485. Out of how many men that are employed?—That is on the coal, apart from their being employed by contractors as repairers.

5486. Two hundred men out of how many men employed by the Ebbw Vale Company at all their collieries?—The number employed by contractors only applies to one colliery.

5487. I wish, if you can, you would tell us the number of men employed by the Ebbw Vale Company at the whole of their collieries; you told us how many men are employed by sub-contractors?—Yes; at one particular colliery, but not by sub-contractors at all the collieries; there would be considerably more than that number.

5488. I have asked you if you will name any other collieries where sub-contractors employ men in the way you have indicated in your reply to Mr. Abraham?—Of course, I will qualify that as applying to some other contractors where the contractors employ the men, but I would not let the remark apply to those at all the other collieries, that they do so independent of the overman or manager.

5489. It is only that colliery that you complain of then, is it?—I know that the practice is extensively used.

5490. Now will you tell us how many men are employed at the whole of the collieries of the Ebbw Vale Company—you know it well—you have been working there?—Yes, well about 3,000 I should say altogether, top and bottom.

5491. You referred to a strike at Ebbw Vale; will you tell the Commission who initiated the dispute?—The men—the workmen.

Mr. *Dale.*

5492. Was that the strike which arose upon the rules for deductions for impurities?—Yes.

Sir *William Lewis.*

5493. They were working under the Sliding Scale Agreement based upon the wages and the customs that obtained at all the collieries in the Association in the year 1879?—Yes.

5494. And they sought to alter the arrangements then existing?—They did.

5495. And that was the cause of the strike?—That was so, but having referred to the arrangements I should like to say that it was an arrangement which did not exist at any of of the other collieries of South Wales and Monmouthshire governed by the sliding scale.

5496. You are a member of the Sliding Scale Committee, and I hardly need remind you that the basis of the sliding scale arrangements is what obtained at all the collieries in 1879. The customs are very variable, as you are aware, and I only wish to have it on the notes that what you complain of was originated by the men claiming what they were not entitled to under the Sliding Scale Agreement?—I should like to say too that the Sliding Scale Agreement at that time ought not to have allowed such a state of things to exist as existed then.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

5497. Are the Commission to regard you here as representing anybody but the members of your federation?—Well, there is a two-fold answer to that, chiefly we represent directly the members of our federation.

5498. That is 8,000 out of 16,000?—Yes; but on several questions we have reason to know from mass meetings we have called, apart from any federation, composed of members and non-members, that what we say is the opinion of the majority of the workmen.

5499. You have not been sent here to represent any other than the members of your own federation?—That is so.

5500. I do not know whether the Chairman asked you about the practice at the Ebbw Vale Colliery; were you worked last as to the inspection by the workmen under the Mines Act?—They take advantage of the clause allowing them to inspect the collieries.

5501. Systematically?—Yes, systematically.

5502. All I would ask you as to the Permanent Fund is if you will give the Commission the names and the number of the men who are members of the Miners' Provident Fund on whose behalf you make complaint?—The whole of the men being in connexion with our branch of the federation at Ebbw Vale are members of the Provident Fund.

5503. How many are they?—They are over 2,000.

5504. Out of about 55,000?—Out of about 3,000 in our district.

5505. There are 55,000 in the fund, and you say you represent 2,000 in the branch at Ebbw Vale?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt.*

5506. With regard to the question of compulsory contraction out of the benefits of the Employers' Liability Act, I understand you to complain of cases of that kind?—Yes, we do.

5507. Is it general or is it confined to some particular collieries in your district?—It is not general, it is not in the whole of the collieries, but in a considerable number of them; all the collieries where the Provident Fund is in existence.

5508. Referring to the strike of which you spoke, I think it was in 1887, how many men were involved in that strike?—About 2,000.

5509. About 2,000?—Yes, roughly speaking.

5510. Were they all members of the Miners' National Union at that time?—No, a very small fraction of them, because there had been no organisation in existence, and that had only existed there for a very short time.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

5511. Would there be more than about 100 or 150 who were members of the Miners' National Union?—Yes, there would be more than that, I should think about 500.

5512. How many?—Well, I have no recollection of the exact numbers, but I should say there would be from 400 to 500.

5513. I do not understand you to complain that the Miners' National Union had not fulfilled its obligations?—Certainly not.

5514. Was it not distinctly understood by the members that the rules of the Miners' National Union did not guarantee support in the case of strikes and lock-outs?—I do not think it was when they decided upon joining that association, but directly they were involved in a strike, of course it lead to a searching of the rules, and they saw that it was so.

5515. It was one of the specified rules?—Yes.

Sir *William Lewis.*

5516. There is one other question I should like to ask. Will you tell the Commission how many members of the committee of management on the Miners' Provident Fund are owners of collieries?—Well, am I to say how many there are at present?

5517. Yes?—No, I cannot; I can say how many the rules make provision for.

5518. Well?—The rule makes provision for six, and it makes provision for eight ordinary members, but the president, who is invariably an employer or a mine owner, is a member of that, and the vice-president is also a member of the board of management.

5519. Will you say that there are not five colliers to every owner on the management committee of the Miners' Provident Fund?—No; but what we complain of is that at the annual general meeting which has to decide any question of importance, as for instance alteration of rules, the honorary members have each one vote at that meeting upon all questions, and any branch of the society, no matter how many members it has, has only one vote, so that we say the management is practically in the hands of the owners. Take for instance one's own particular branch, where, as I have said, we have between 2,000 and 3,000 members, they would only have one vote at the annual general meeting, whereas five of the managers and other officials in connexion with those collieries are honorary members of the fund, and they would have a vote each, so that five managers and officials would have five votes against one vote for between 2,000 and 3,000 ordinary members or miners at an annual meeting.

5520. As to that the rules will speak for themselves?—Yes; that is what I say.

The witness withdrew.

18 *November* 1891.] Mr. WILLIAM EVANS. [*Continued.*

Mr. WILLIAM EVANS called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

5521. What is your official relationship with the Rhondda Miners' Association?—I am sub-agent and secretary.

5522. What number of men are employed in the collieries of that district?—Something like 12,000.

5523. And of those how many are members of your Association?—About 10,000.

5524. What is the district?—Steam coal.

5525. I mean what is its area?—It is about eight or nine miles long.

5526. That is the Rhondda Valleys?—Yes, there are two valleys, Rhondda-Fach and Rhondda-Fawr.

5527. Your Association, I think, has sent in answers to the official questions of the Commission?—Yes.

5528. I do not propose to take you through these questions, because in fact I suppose you would simply repeat the answers which have been officially given in writing; but I would just invite you to state to the Commission that which you desire to submit in regard more especially to any labour difficulties that have arisen in your district, their cause, and the manner in which they were disposed of, or in which you think they could be averted in the future. Have you had any general strike in your district of late years?—Not any general strike; we have had several minor disputes.

5529. Resulting in local strikes?—Yes, several during late years.

5530. Is your district connected with the South Wales Sliding Scale Committee?—Yes.

5531. And the functions of that committee would therefore extend to your district?—They would.

5532. Can you say whether there has been any recent important local strike?—Yes, several; there is one now; the workmen have been on strike since October 1st.

5533. Perhaps you had better tell us at what colliery?—Nixon's Navigation Colliery, Mountain Ash; the 6-ft. seam in the Navigation and Deep Duffryn, numbering something like 450 men. They were on strike for a week in June last. The matter was referred to the Sliding Scale Committee, and was referred by them to two of their members to determine, but unfortunately those two could not agree, and the workmen are still idle.

5534. They resumed work after the reference?—Yes; we were told in all probability the matter would be settled by those gentlemen. The men resumed work and were compelled afterwards to give notice on the 1st of September because the two gentlemen appointed by the Sliding Scale Committee failed to arrange the matter amicably.

5535. They failed to agree and on that becoming known the men gave in their notices on the 1st of September?—Yes.

5536. Those notices expired when?—The last day of September.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

5537. And since that date the pit has been playing?—That seam, the six-foot seam in that pit.

5538. Have you any observations to offer to the Commission in regard to any deficiency in the machinery of the Sliding Scale Committee for preventing those results?—I should like to emphasise what has already been said by the other representatives from South Wales, I believe if an umpire belonged to the scale, that certainly this strike would have been averted; that is, if any independent person, any third party, had sat and the matter had been relegated to him, I think without any doubt whatever that the matter would have been settled. Another point in the sliding scale which in my opinion ought to be rectified, and which causes a great deal of irritation, is the long interval that elapses after cases have been referred to the Sliding Scale Committee; they are not settled for months.

5539. The undue delay you mean in the consideration of the cases brought before them?—Yes.

5540. Is the sliding scale system of regulating wages in your opinion a desirable one?—I think it is one of the best that can be formed for regulating wages, and certainly it has been, I think, the best institution that we have had in South Wales, and if these (as I consider) two defects were remedied it would be more perfect than it now is.

5541. Your two suggestions therefore for avoiding the strikes in your district would be more prompt consideration of disputes by the Sliding Scale Committee, and the appointment of an umpire in case those appointed by the Sliding Scale Committee to investigate the dispute fail to agree?—Yes.

5542. On what other point do you desire to offer evidence?—I should like to say a word in connexion with a black list that has been referred to already. This dispute which I have just mentioned originated about two years ago.

5543. The same dispute which has now culminated in this strike?—Yes. The men have shewn great patience and forbearance in not precipitating matters until they were at last compelled to do so. They were simply asking for what is paid in other collieries. Owing we might say to the irregularities of the seam and the considerable amount of rubbish to be handled, the men are dependent to a great extent upon allowances, but those allowances for the extra labour incurred are various and have been changed from time to time, therefore they wanted a standard chiefly for two items, the thin coal and the rubbish which came down.

5544. I do not want to inquire into the details of this particular district, we are not here to inquire into them?—Then when they failed to agree the men were told that they had their own remedy, that they could go elsewhere where they could get things to suit them better, and some men that were in fact at home and had been for weeks prior to the commencement of

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

the strike, one especially, was owing to an accident in that colliery idle for 13 weeks, and when he applied for employment, although he never tendered a notice, he was refused. There were several cases of a similar kind who for five weeks were not at the collieries where notices were given who have been refused employment. Others who had commenced operations in other collieries and worked there for some weeks have been stopped unceremoniously without any notice whatever. And I think it is very unfair, when the men have completed their legal month's notice, and have been told to go elsewhere, that they cannot get a day's work anywhere in the locality. Their names are sent from one colliery to another, and in some cases where there is a doubt that they have given wrong names, I know of one case especially where the officials were sent to recognise the men on their coming up from the pits.

5545. Where the men have obtained employment at other collieries and have worked a certain length of time there, and then been summarily discharged without notice, have they given false names?—In some instances, but very rarely.

5546. Would that be the ground upon which the obligation to give a notice was deemed to be dispensed with?—No, we had a case last week where two men had employment, and when they went there the next morning were actually in the trams going to the colliery, their names were asked. They had given their right names the night before, and the manager said: "Well, your names have been sent here, and I cannot give you employment," although they were actually employed the night before and in the trams going to the colliery.

5547. You mean they were engaged the night before?—Yes.

5548. But they had not actually worked in the colliery?—They were going in the next morning in the tram to the colliery. I may say labourers, in this Mountain Ash strike especially, who never gave notice could be found employment at that colliery, but many of those men who had nothing to do with the dispute who did not serve notices could not get employment elsewhere, although they had nothing whatever to do with the strike. They cannot get employment, simply because they were working at the particular colliery before.

5549. They were men then to whom the owners of the colliery gave notice?—Yes.

5550. Their services not being required because of the expiration of the notices given by other classes of men?—Yes.

5551. Do you wish to make any further observation on that or any other subject?—In connexion with the inspection of the collieries I ratify what has already been said by other witnesses from South Wales that we require a great many more inspectors than we now have. Although I do not complain of these men, and certainly believe that they are doing all they can, yet I say owing to the extensive area of the South Wales coalfield they are unable to cope with all the work that is required. I believe that sub-inspectors—working men inspectors—

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

should be appointed. The men who have been selected in the past are from official circles we may say—more directly in connexion with the employers than the workmen, although I have no reason to doubt that they are perfectly impartial and do what they can. But I think that men of another class should be selected, and men who would devote more time than can certainly be spent by these gentlemen in examining the collieries. Although there are some gentlemen who differ from us and some members of Parliament, I believe we require inspectors a little more in the capacity of detectives as you might say. The inspectors, on some occasions it is true, pay surprise visits; but, as a rule, I believe they send notice beforehand to the collieries, and we have collieries in our district which require a workman four days to examine them.

5552. Your men take advantage of the power to appoint two of their number at present?—Yes, and they take four days to examine it. Therefore, it is impossible for any inspector of mines, whatever his abilities and his energy might be, to make a thorough investigation of that colliery, its workings, &c. in a couple of hours or in a day.

5553. I understand you to say that when the two men appointed to examine on behalf of their fellow men a particular colliery, they take four days?—Yes. I think it would be a greater blessing than we can imagine, if more inspectors were appointed. Although the present staff do certainly a great amount of good, I think that they should be multiplied to three or four times their present number, and this from the ranks of working men who could give more time and attention and certainly give better inspection, and this would certainly result in great benefits.

5554. Is there any other point on which you wish to offer evidence?—In connexion with the eight hours from bank to bank, I need not say anything further than has been said already by my friends.

5555. You agree with the views that they have expressed on that subject?—Yes.

5556. And in so doing, do I understand you express the views of the Miners' Association?—Yes.

5557. Those views being in favour of a legislative limitation of the hours of underground labour to eight?—Yes.

5558. Am I right in supposing you do not propose to extend that limitation to surface men?—No, eight hours for underground men.

5559. And do you advocate and do your men support it on the grounds that have been already given?—Yes. It has been advocated at different meetings and at conferences, and by petitions, &c.

5560. My question was not as to the manner in which they had evidenced their opinion, but the ground for believing that that was desirable?—I agree with the other witnesses upon that point.

Mr. *Trow.*

5561. Is the Commission to understand that the eight hours is only to apply to underground men, and not to the men on the surface?—That is so—for colliers.

Sir *William Lewis.*

5562. You have just said "colliers"; do you mean that the other underground men are to work longer?—No, eight hours for those in the mines.

5563. You include timber men and labourers?—All underground men.

5564. With reference to the strike mentioned at Mr. Nixon's collieries. Mr. Nixon's collieries have been governed by the Sliding Scale Agreement since the origin of the sliding scale arrangement in South Wales?—Yes.

5565. And the basis of the present scale is the prices paid and the customs which prevailed in December 1879?—Yes.

5566. Does not the present dispute arise from the workmen seeking to have something different to what they were entitled to under that agreement?—No. They seek to be paid upon those items in another manner. Allowances were given and have been given every year, but we find that less allowances are given than were paid years ago, and that the system is not a sound system. There are many workmen perhaps who will toil hard for the fortnights and others in some cases might have done less work; because one man has earned a certain amount of money during the fortnight he gets less allowance than another.

5567. Is it or is it not an application on the part of the men for a change?—It is for a change, certainly.

5568. And a change inconsistent with the basis of the Sliding Scale Agreement?—I do not think that the sliding scale basis has anything at all to do with the question.

5569. That is inconsistent with what you have stated in public; as I believe I am right in stating (you will correct me if I am not) that you actually recommended the men not to be guided by the decision of the Sliding Scale Committee in this matter?—Nothing of the kind.

5570. Then you are misrepresented?—Yes.

5571. As regards your complaints about the labourers, their services would be unnecessary in consequence of the colliers not working, would they not?—Yes.

5572. So that the owners have no further need of their services until the men resume work?—But it is unfair that they should be prevented from working at other collieries. If they refuse to employ them at their own colliery they should not limit their powers to seek employment elsewhere. I think that is rather hard lines.

5573. Now about an umpire. Have you enquired into the arrangements that have existed in the north for some time where they have given up the appointment of an umpire for the settlement of similar questions?—No.

5574. You know nothing about it?—Nothing at all.

5575. You do not know that the existence of an umpire was thought to be the means of introducing a great many applications for alteration, and that it led to disputes?—I am not aware of it.

5576. Could you tell us how the decision of an umpire would be enforced as against the men,

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

supposing the men did not like the decision of the umpire?—They have always loyally accepted every decision so far.

5577. You are speaking within your own knowledge?—Yes.

5578. Then you have not heard of cases in South Wales where they have distinctly refused to abide by the decision of an umpire?—I have known of cases in our own valley where the workmen have accepted decisions although they were against the weight of the evidence at the time, and that has been publicly acknowledged in a court of justice; but I know of no cases where the workmen have refused to adhere to the decision of an umpire.

5579. Then you are not aware of a case that occurred in the Aberdare Valley where the decision of a stipendiary, arrived at after sitting four days, was repudiated by the workmen, and the colliery laid idle?—That is outside my district.

5580. Neither have you heard of another similar case in the Swansea district?—Not in my parish.

5581. How would you suggest that a decision should be enforced either against the workman or against the owner, assuming either side feel inclined to repudiate it?—I can only repeat what has already been said by Mr. Evans, that our rules compel the workmen to abide loyally by every decision that may be given, whether against or in their favour, and that they could not remain members otherwise.

5582. And suppose they prefer being excluded from your society to submitting to the award, what then?—We have not had cases of that kind in the district.

5583. And you have not thought that out?—No, I have not.

5584. Do you seriously suggest that the time taken up in dealing with the various cases that are brought before the Sliding Scale Committee has been the means of creating ill-feeling between the owners and the workmen, and has thus produced further strikes?—Yes, I honestly believe it. There are cases now waiting final settlement that have been before the sliding scale for the last nine months.

5585. Before the sliding scale, and no agreement come to?—They have been referred to members of the Sliding Scale Committee, and they have not had the leisure nor the will to dispose of them, so that I would enforce a certain time within which these matters should be terminated.

5586. You know that one of the arrangements of the Sliding Scale Committee is that they shall meet not less than once a month?—Yes.

5587. And that committee is composed of a number of persons who are largely engaged in the management of collieries, a number of others who are like yourself acting for the different districts; we have one member of Parliament who is occasionally unable to leave his parliamentary duties and come down to sliding scale meetings, and for these and other reasons the proceedings are somewhat protracted; but have

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

you informed yourself as to whether the number of cases are increasing or decreasing?—No.

5588. What would you say as to whether cases had increased during the present good times or had decreased?—I do not think they have increased.

5589. Would you be surprised if you found by the minutes of the Sliding Scale Committee that they have greatly increased?—I would.

5590. You have suggested that the inspectors should be somewhat in the position of detectives?—Yes.

5591. Will you tell us from what class you would draw these detectives?—From the workmen; from experienced workmen that have worked a number of years underground.

5592. Should they pass any examination?—Not the same as the others.

5593. What examination would you suggest that they should pass?—A practical examination, chiefly.

5594. And would you propose that people who are to pass, say, the equivalent of a second-class certificate should examine the workings and make suggestions to colliery managers who have obtained first-class certificates, and not only that, but who are responsible for the safety of the mine from day to day?—I would, because there are many practical workmen who have for years been employed underground, who would make, you might say, good men in this direction.

5595. No doubt; but do you consider that they would be better than the practical men who have first of all had to obtain practical experience, and after that to pass an examination and obtain a certificate either of service or of passing the examination, and who beyond that are responsible for the safe conduct of the mine from day to day in accordance with the Acts of Parliament?—They would be quite as good in many instances.

5596. If that is so would you make these inspectors responsible for the consequences of the suggestions that they might make?—I would, and would have no fear of the result.

5597. So that you would transfer the responsibility from the certificated manager of the mine to working-men inspectors to be appointed?—I would make them responsible for all that they should suggest—for their actions.

5598. Do you not think there would be some difficulty in that divided responsibility. The manager would be responsible for everything that he did outside the suggestion of a working-man inspector, and the working-man inspector would be responsible for any suggestion that he made; do you think that would conduce to the safety of any colliery?—I believe it would.

5599. You think it would?—Preferable to the present system we have of the inspectors being irregular and very ineffective.

5600. As regards the irregularity of the inspection to what extent do the men in your district avail themselves of the provisions of the Act for inspection?—I think the majority of the collieries inspect monthly.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

5601. Do you suggest that in addition to the monthly inspection by the workmen; to the inspection by the fireman daily before each shift, to the inspection by the present inspectors of mines, there shall be further inspection by sub-inspectors?—Yes.

5602. You think that would be an advantage?—I do.

5603. Is the National Colliery in your district?—Yes.

5604. I will read the Report of the National Colliery, Wattstown, recently, as it is not quite consistent with your views. "The National "Colliery, Wattstown. We are asked to publish "the following:—'We, the undersigned, repre- "'senting the workmen of the National Col- "'liery, do hereby affirm with reference to the "'38th General Rule of the Coal Mines Regu- "'lation Act, 1887, which provides that "'periodical inspections of the colliery shall be "'made by and on behalf of the workmen that "'every facility and cordial support of the "'management has been afforded us so that "'the inspections are carried out in the best "'possible manner. We also wish to testify as "'to Rule 39 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, "'1887, which states that no person not now "'employed as a coal or ironstone getter shall "'be allowed to work alone as a coal or iron- "'stone getter in the face of the workings "'until he has had two years' experience of "'such work under the supervision of skilled "'workmen, or unless he shall previously be "'employed for two years in or about the face "'of the workings of a mine, it is strictly "'enforced, no case of non-compliance with "'this rule having come to the knowledge of "'the working committee. When we bear in "'mind that the National Colliery gives em- "'ployment to 1,100 workmen, the admirable "'manner in which the whole of the Coal "'Mines Regulation Act, 1887, is adhered to "'and strictly enforced, is highly creditable to "'the present management.'" Is that exceptional or general?—I think I can explain the reason of that resolution.

5605. This is signed by David Thomas, chairman, Wattstown, November 10th, 1891; committeemen, David Thomas, Griffith Bevan, Enoch Griffiths, and David Morgan, secretary?—It is perfectly genuine. The matter is now before the district.

5606. The matter of what?—The matter of unskilled labour and our monthly inspections. As I said before, monthly inspections are done by the workmen in the majority of collieries. In some collieries the management, I believe, give every facility to the workmen, and are glad that the workmen do inspect the collieries; but in other collieries the manager must see the report of the workmen before it will be entered in the report book, and if there is anything distasteful to him there it will not be reported; they will have to inspect the colliery a second time and a third time if the place is not clear, and in many instances the workmen, therefore

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

are not allowed free liberty and latitude in reporting the circumstances of the colliery.

5607. Will you mention the names of any colliery that you have now been referring to?—I could give it you, but that would prejudice the workmen. I could give you the names of the workmen that have been stopped for correctly reporting the state of the collieries.

5608. I would ask you to give them, and I would ask you for the names of the collieries?—I will not give them, because certainly those gentlemen would be on a blacker list than the ones I have before mentioned. But I have got their names, and I could furnish the Commission with them. I know from many years' connexion with the workmen in this capacity, and from attending many committees, and from knowing the circumstances that workmen have been sent a second and third time to examine a place because they reported something irregular. At our last monthly meeting we passed a resolution asking every colliery to bring a report upon this important matter to our next monthly meeting. The workmen of Wattstown have held a meeting, and this is their resolution.

5609. You say that there are colliery owners now, not in the past merely, but now, that take exception to the men correctly reporting the result of their inspection?—In some instances I do. On the other hand, I say that there are very many of them who welcome the monthly inspection because it is a check upon their own officials.

5610. With respect to eight hours, you do not agree with your friend David Morgan, who represents the Aberdare and Merthyr district?—I repeat what I have said before. I have nothing to do with David Morgan. He makes his own answers; I, mine.

5611. You know that he recommended nine hours from bank to bank?—I do not know what he recommended. I was not here at the time.

5612. Are the collieries in the Aberdare Valley similar to the collieries in the Rhondda Valley?—I think they are.

5613. Working the same seams?—Yes.

5614. And practically under the same conditions?—Yes, certainly.

5615. And would you suggest that the thousands of colliers in the Aberdare and Merthyr Valleys, who would be content with nine hours from bank to bank, should be forced to comply with eight hours from bank to bank, because the Rhondda Valley collieries require that?—Yes, if the majority of the workmen say so, and certainly they think it would be to their interests from all points of view.

5616. Do you say that the majority of the workmen in the district, or the majority of the workmen in the kingdom, should decide this?—Well, in South Wales especially; I believe in Home Rule.

5617. Then suppose South Wales went in for it, and Monmouthshire did not, would you leave Monmouthshire alone, and say that South Wales alone should have the eight hours?—I have not studied it to that effect, but, as I have said before, we have held meetings, and the vast majority of our men are of opinion—it is a unanimous opinion—that eight hours' work would be of great benefit.

5618. Have you considered the effect upon the cost of working a colliery that the reduction of the number of hours would have?—No, I am not in a position to know that.

5619. Would you still persist in it if the cost was such as to entail the closing of a number of collieries?—Yes.

5620. And throw men out of employment?—I do not think it would entail the closing of collieries.

5621. I am asking you to assume that it would for a moment; would you still insist upon it?—Yes, but I am far from believing that it would.

5622. Will you tell the Commission how many days a week the collieries in your district work on an average at present?—On an average I do not think they work four—in some collieries they only work two, owing to stop-waggons.

5623. But before the stop-waggons; when there were plenty of waggons; how many days a week?—On an average they were working full time, and until the last three or four months; it is very, very slack with us in the Rhondda Valley, now especially; very slack.

5624. That is to say, the collieries were in operation, but what about the men being at work?—I believe they were working regularly.

5625. Have you taken any steps to ascertain what percentage of men were absent from the colliery after, say, the first Monday in the month?—Yes, I have a little.

5626. What would you say?—I would say that there would be a few absent on the Tuesday, less Wednesday, and on the Thursday, as a rule, they would be all in work.

5627. Would you say there were 50 per cent. of the men in on Tuesday?—Yes, more than that—80 per cent.

5628. That is your opinion?—Yes.

5629. Have you ascertained that from the books of the colliery?—From the managers of the colliery.

5630. So that if the owner's return should turn out to be different, the return would be wrong?—I should not like to say that, but I have been inquiring of many managers in our valley as to the result of the monthly holiday, and something like 20 per cent. were absent on the Tuesday, but I am glad to tell the Commission this: that I was speaking with one of our chief managers last week, who is the manager of two or three large collieries in our valley, and he told me that the men were losing less time now on the Tuesday and Wednesday than they had been before.

5631. Since the stopped waggons?—There has been a marked improvement.

5632. Will you tell the Commission anything about the earnings of the colliers in the Rhondda Valley?—If they were working full time, and

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

getting plenty of clearance, they would earn a moderately good wage.

5633. Say before June?—If they had plenty of clearance they would earn very likely from 6*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* a day, but there are miners now in our valley during these days not earning 2*s.* a day.

5634. Then you would not admit that there are some of them who earn as much as 10*s.* 6*d.* to 11*s.* a day when they work?—Yes, I would admit that some do, and others are earning a great deal less. But there are many, I believe, who would be earning that figure.

5635. What do you say as to the price that your colliers pay for their house coal?—I should think they pay on an average something like 4*d.* or 5*d.* a cwt. for their coal—between 6*s.* and 7*s.*

5636. Is not that very exceptional; is not the average more like 4*s.* 9*d.* to 5*s.* 6*d.*?—No.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

5637. I want to ask you one question about inspection of the workings by the workmen themselves. I think you said that very often the men were not allowed to make the report until after they had seen the manager once or twice; is not that inconsistent with the clause which provides for that inspection; does not the clause say that they shall forthwith make a true report?—Yes, certainly it does.

5638. I will read it to you if you like. "Every facility shall be afforded by the owner, "agent, and manager, and all persons in the "mine for the purpose of the inspection, and "the persons appointed shall forthwith make a "true report of the result of the inspection, and "that report shall be recorded in a book to be "kept at the mine for the purpose." If what you say takes place, is not that an infraction of that clause of the Coal Mines Regulation Act?—To some extent it is.

5639. Then, that being so, have you taken any steps to enforce it?—No, we have not, because I am afraid that would make matters worse still; but, as I have said before, in the majority of cases the workmen are not interfered with.

5640. Then it is exceptional?—It is exceptional.

5641. It is so far exceptional that you have not thought it worth while to take proceedings?—No.

Mr. *Burt.*

5642. When you spoke about some pits working only two days a week, owing to stopped waggons, is that another name for a falling-off in demand?—I do not know what is the reason of it. I only gave the fact that they were working at present in some instances to that extent.

5643. Is it through slackness of trade; are the men actually laid idle?—Yes, they are laid idle.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

5644. And working only two days a week?—In some instances of course; but in others I say that owing, I believe, to the depression of trade there is a slackness in our district lately, and in some instances their earnings are as low as that.

5645. But that is exceptional?—Exceptional, very exceptional.

5646. What are the present hours from bank to bank in the Rhondda Valley?—Nine hours.

5647. What would be the maximum?—From 9 to 9½.

5648. Would there be any cases in which men or youths were more than 9½ hours from bank to bank?—Very rare.

5649. But there are some?—There might be some; very rare.

5650. Would the colliers be interfered with or dismissed if they stopped work, say, at the end of eight hours in the coal face?—How do you mean, would they be stopped.

5651. Would they be dismissed from their employment or interfered with by the coal owners if they stopped work at the end of eight hours?—Do you mean as a general body?

5652. I mean a number of men agreeing to do that?—There are many coming out.

5653. Is there anything that would prevent them from agreeing only to work eight hours?—Efforts have been made to get it generally, but they have failed as a body; but there are some single instances, certainly.

5654. They do in some cases stop work at the end of eight hours without interference?—They might, certainly, on many occasions refuse to remain in another hour; they would not get another tram, or something of that kind.

5655. But there are instances of the men stopping at the end of the eight hours, and giving up?—There is no agreement; there are no special cases.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

5656. You spoke of the day's wages in the Rhondda Valley varying from 2*s.* to 10*s.* 6*d.* or 11*s.*?—I said that now, owing to the depression of trade, and the collieries being so full, they cannot get a sufficient number of trams, and, on some special occasions, they do not earn more.

5657. I only desire to ask you how it came about that the wages fell sometimes as low as 2*s.*; do you mean that is an average wage?—No.

5658. Does that represent the average day's work for the men who are earning these very low wages?—Yes, at particular periods.

5659. Would that mean that they were only working two days a week?—Yes.

5660. The 2*s.* then is an average calculated over the whole week?—If two men work together, they might get perhaps only two or three trams between them, the collieries being so full, and no clearance, so that their wages might be very low.

5661. When you say they earn a wage of 2*s.*, do you mean that the total wage during the

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

week is 12*s.*, which you divide by six in order to obtain an average?—No; what I said was this, that the wages had been very high in the Rhondda Valley up to between June and July last, and that they were earning on an average from 6*s.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* a day, and in some cases more, and in many cases less. But there is now, we may say, a depression in the Rhondda, and the collieries are working on an average, as I said to Sir William, about four days. Owing to, we may say, the incursion of labour from the agricultural districts, as has been stated before, the collieries are very full, and the colliers do not get sufficient trams, and certainly they would be able to earn twice or three times as much if they could only get clearance.

5662. Do these men of whom you are speaking work five days a week, and earn 2*s.* on each of those days?—No, I said they are not now in some cases working more than two days, for they cannot get more than two days' employment.

5663. Then do I understand that on each of those two days they earn 6*s.* a day, so that when you speak of 2*s.* a day you mean that, taking the week through, they only earn 12*s.*, or an average for the six days of 2*s.* a day; that is what I want to get at?—What I said was this, that there are some collieries in our district now, and have been for the past, we may say, three or four weeks, working not more than two days a week, owing to the collieries being so full.

5664. They do not get a sufficient number of trams, and then their wages are very low?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale.*

5665. When you mentioned 2*s.* you meant that there were exceptional cases in which a man only earned 2*s.* in respect of a shift's work?—Yes.

Sir *William Lewis.*

5666. Did you make that statement?—In answer to Sir William Lewis, I said that there might be exceptional cases, and that there are now.

5667. I did not understand you so; I thought that the 2*s.* was for two days. I did not understand you to say that there were any collieries where, when they do a day's work, they only earn 2*s.* in that day?—No, I never said that.

Mr. *Dale.*

5668. How do you get at the 2*s.* There are two modes suggested which are supposed to have influenced you in that statement. The one was this, that if a certain man had only the opportunity of working two days in a certain week, and he earned on each of those days 6*s.*, he would then have earned 12*s.* during that week, and we should get at your 2*s.* by dividing that 12*s.* which he earned during that week by the six working days of the week?—I did not mean that.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

5669. Do you then mean that there are cases in which a collier, owing to want of trams or for some other reason, only managed to earn 2*s.* for the whole shift?—Yes, that is what I say, for the whole shift. When he does not get sufficient clearance; that is what I said. There are collieries now in our valley at the present moment, where, owing to depression of trade, and the collieries being so full, they do not earn upon some occasions more than that. If they were to get sufficient employment and plenty of clearance, they could earn certainly 6*s.* to 7*s.* a day; that is what I said.

Mr. *Mundella.*

5670. Did I understand you that the whole of the collieries in your district are governed as to the rate of wages by a sliding scale?—Yes.

5671. The Sliding Scale Committee is composed equally of employers and employed, is it not?—Yes.

5672. And in case of any difficulties arising in connexion with your men about wages or conditions of work, those conditions are referred to the Sliding Scale Committee, are they?—Yes.

5673. And you say they do not promptly deal with them?—Yes.

5674. Why do not they?—Owing to a great extent to what Sir William Lewis said—that they have other interests to attend to, and to other reasons.

5675. What is the number of persons constituting the Sliding Scale Committee?—Eleven on each side.

5676. Do you have to wait till 22 persons are called together before any slight difficulty or dispute in connexion with the mine can be settled?—Oh, no. It is referred to two of the committee—one on each side.

5677. Is there any difficulty in getting two persons to meet at once and arrange a difficulty of that kind?—There is.

Mr. *Dale.*

I think the witness means two persons cannot be appointed till the Sliding Scale Committee has met and appointed them.

Mr. *Mundella.*

5678. Then the difficulty is that you must have first a meeting of the 22 members of the Sliding Scale Committee, or such of them as can attend; these two persons must be appointed to intervene in this dispute, and settle it, and report it to the Sliding Scale Committee before anything can be done?—Before it is finally settled?—Yes.

5679. But have you no standing committee to settle minor disputes?—No Committee besides the Sliding Scale.

5680. But have you never adopted the plan of having a Standing Committee of Conciliation, say of four persons, two on each side, to whom these cases could be referred, and by whom they

Mr. *Mundella*—continued.

could be settled pending the meeting of the committee?—No.

5681. Have you never thought of such a system as that?—We have thought, and as I have said before we believe, that our present committee, if an umpire could be added to the committee to whom we could refer all points of dispute which could not be settled and agreed upon by the members appointed by the committee, it would to a very great extent satisfy our interests.

5682. When you speak of your present committee, do you mean your committee of 22 members?—Yes.

5683. It is very difficult to get 22 members present together?—These disputes are referred to two members of the committee, and they determine the dispute. They are not referred to the whole general committee, but the members appoint others to deal with the cases.

5684. But I understand that your dispute must first go before the 22 members of the committee?—Yes, as a formal matter.

5685. And you have to wait for 22 members, and they meet monthly?—We have not to wait for these gentlemen to decide the case.

5686. But you wait for them to meet to appoint persons who shall decide?—Yes.

5687. And the consequence is that there may be a month intervene between the time of the dispute taking place and the time of the committee meeting, and then the committee has to appoint two persons, and then you hear all the persons before the dispute can be settled?—Yes.

5688. Then you have no standing sub-committee of the Sliding Scale Committee who can settle these questions?—No.

5689. The next point I want to ask you is this. You have no referee I understand?—No.

5690. In case of dispute, and the two parties on the Sliding Scale Committee not agreeing, you have no arbitrator or referee whom you can call in to act as umpire between the parties and to give a decision?—No; that is what we complain of. That is one defect in our Sliding Scale Committee—the absence of an umpire or referee.

5691. Then your present Sliding Scale Committee is solely a Committee of Conciliation without arbitration at all?—Without an arbitrator.

5692. Without arbitration?—Not without arbitration; but there is no arbitrator and no independent party to determine between the two.

5693. Suppose the two parties are equal—the workmen and the employers on the committee—and they do not agree, you come to a dead-lock then, do not you?—Yes.

5694. Then have you nothing in your rules authorising the calling in of an umpire or arbitrator on whom you could both agree?—The employers have always refused to do that.

Mr. *Mundella*—continued.

5695. Are you willing for it, and the employers unwilling?—Yes, the workmen have repeatedly asked for that.

5696. You have repeatedly applied to have a referee in case of non-agreement, and you are willing to be bound by the decision?—Yes.

5697. And you say that the employers will not assent to that?—No.

5698. Then you were asked whether in case of any decision or award being made, and the workmen being recalcitrant, how would you enforce the award?—Yes, I was asked that question.

5699. Your answer was, you never knew such a case?—Yes; we have never had one in our district to my knowledge.

5700. But suppose the workmen refused to abide by the decision either of the Sliding Scale Committee or of a referee appointed by the Sliding Scale Committee, what means have you of dealing with the workman: you could refuse him, could you not, subsistence if he went on strike?—Yes.

5701. And you would do so?—Yes, certainly.

5702. And he would not only be deprived of the benefits of your Union, but he would also have to suffer from the public opinion of the workmen being against him?—Yes.

5703. And, of course, if he left your Union he would cease to be under your control?—Yes.

5704. Then you would have done all you possibly could when you deprived him of the benefits of the Union?—Yes.

5705. Did you ever hear of workmen being deprived of the benefits of the Union, and being deprived of strike pay when they refused to obey the decision of a Board of Arbitration?—I have heard of cases.

5706. You have heard of it in the north of England, I suppose?—Yes, and heard reports.

5707. You have heard of decisions made, for instance, by Mr. Dale, myself, and others, and that when the workmen have not loyally obeyed the decision, the Union has deprived them of strike pay and forced them either to go in or to stand out at their own expense?—Yes.

5708. That is all the workmen can do, is it not?—Nothing more can be done.

Mr. *Abraham.*

5709. With respect to the composition and the functions of the Sliding Scale Committee, of course it is not necessary that all the members of the committee should come together before they can consider the question?—No; I said so.

5710. Questions can be considered and evidence can be given by men before the committee itself?—Yes.

5711. Without referring it to anybody outside the committee?—Yes.

5712. That has been done?—Yes.

5713. In cases where it is almost impossible to bring sufficient evidence, and where it is necessary to visit the collieries, then two members of the committee are delegated to consider the question?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

in the whole of the Tamworth district are supplied with coal free of charge, except that they pay for the conveyance from the collieries to their respective homes.

5737. You would make a distinction, would not you, between coal which is obviously an addition to wages and tools, and repairs to same, and lamps, which, if not found, would be a deduction from wages?—I do not quite follow the drift of that question.

5738. You make the remark, I understand, that the employer finds the workman coal?—He does.

5739. That, of course, would be an addition to the spending power of the workman in his household?—Yes, quite so.

5740. You also say that he finds tools, repairs to same, and lamps?—Yes.

5741. But, obviously, if he did not find those, they would be a deduction from the earnings for domestic and spending purposes of the workmen?—Yes, but we regard it that the earnings would be increased by that amount.

5742. You mean that the average earnings which you state are not subject to any expenditure by the workmen in earning the same in the way of tools?—That is so.

5743. And they are supplemented by coals free of charge?—Free of charge, except for delivery from the colliery to the house. There is another point which requires a little explanation. The Secretary to this Association has replied that at each colliery there is a sick and benefit club. During sickness the payments range from 7*s.* to 11*s.* a week, and extend over from six months to two years. That is mainly true, but there are cases in which the workman and employers unite together in a joint insurance, whereby a workman who is insured gets a fixed sum per week up to two years, but if the accident terminates fatally, or if he is killed, his relations receive a sum of 50*l.*; and this is an insurance which in no way causes workmen to contract out of the Act.

5744. It will be convenient, perhaps, although given in your written replies, that you should state the number of workmen employed in the district covered by your Association?—The reply in that respect is incorrect. The figures, as taken from Her Majesty's Inspector's Report, are 1,515 underground workmen, and 609 surface workmen.

5745. What is the total?—2,124.

5746. How many firms employ that number of workmen?—There are 10 collieries owned by six firms in which these men are employed.

5747. This district is Warwickshire?—Warwickshire.

5748. It is not the whole of the mining district of Warwickshire?—No.

5749. What are the hours?—The hours are nominally nine from bank to bank. We estimate that that gives a working period of 7½ hours at the working face only. Out of the nine hours there are three-quarters of an hour allowed for meal time at least from 35 minutes to 45 minutes. It varies in different collieries.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

5750. When you used the word "nominally" in what way did you intend to qualify the statement that it was nine hours from bank to bank?—I mean to say that men may be a little late in coming out or something of that kind, but it is nine hours from bank to bank, that is the regulation.

5751. In what manner are wages arranged in that district, either general or local?—They are generally arranged between the representatives of the colliery and the workmen at that colliery; but there is usually a consultation among the employers previously to any dispute being settled, or the initiation of any dispute.

5752. Is there a Workmen's Association corresponding with the Owners' Association?—There is.

5753. And does the Owners' Association hold official relations with that Union?—We have had communication with the representative of that Union repeatedly, and it is very satisfactory to state that the relationships have always been most cordial. We have got on exceedingly well with the miners' representative there.

5754. Then, if the condition of trade, either improving or the reverse, leads to any revision of wages, is that brought about by discussion between the two associations. Wages have always been in an upward direction, but hitherto any revision of wages has been brought about in that manner.

5755. Is there any joint committee or other tribunal for dealing with disputes?—No, there is not. The managers of the colliery and the agent usually confer together about it, and it has commonly been adjusted without trouble.

5756. Have you had any strike in that district within the last few years?—The last strike was in June 1879, I think.

5757. Twelve years ago?—Yes.

5758. Perhaps these relationships wer not then established?—No, they were not. The strike resulted in the establishment of a sliding scale, but it was never operative. The workmen did not, amongst themselves, agree together; and the sliding scale could not be brought to a successful issue.

5759. An agreement was arrived at?—Yes.

5760. But it proved to be unacceptable?—Yes, it proved abortive. The workmen's delegates were perfectly loyal to the arrangement; but the body of workmen quarrelled among themselves, and it did not result in any good.

5761. So that it did not actually come into operation?—No.

5762. Then, have you had any considerable local strikes since 1879?—No, not any strike worth mentioning except a few days with regard to trifling differences at an individual colliery or two.

5763. Can you tell us what proportion of the men employed in the collieries of your district are members of the Miners' Union?—I should think there would be about 70 per cent.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

5764. You have told us that the relationships between the Owners' Association and the Miners' Association are amicable and satisfactory?—Yes, they are.

5765. Is there any difficulty between the members of the Union and non-unionists as affecting their working together?—There is a disposition on the part of the Union men to rather boycott the non-union men. It is not very long since a meeting was held at which a resolution was passed authorising the agent to give notice to the employers for the Union men to cease work unless the employers reduced the wages of the non-union men to the level at which they stood before the Union was formed; that is to say, to put it in perhaps plainer language, the Union men were to have 45 per cent. more because they were in the Union than the non-union men because they were not in the Union, or else the two branches at the colliery would not work together.

5766. Did the owners avail themselves of that opportunity of getting the wages reduced?—I think that the Union agent has come to the conclusion that it is not altogether a politic course to pursue. We have not, however, received the notice, I am bound to say, but that was the resolution which was passed.

5767. Was it a resolution of a local lodge?—No.

5768. Of the whole district?—It was the resolution of the miners of the whole district, and it was a fairly well attended meeting.

5769. Not a mass meeting, perhaps?—Yes, it was a mass meeting.

Mr. *Mawdsley.*

5770. Not a representatives' meeting?—Oh, no, not at all—a mass meeting.

Mr. *Dale.*

5771. Seeing that you have been singularly free from strikes or labour difficulties, perhaps you have no suggestion to make for the avoidance of such?—I look upon a sliding scale as being the most efficacious means of doing that if both parties can be prevailed upon to loyally abide by it. But in our district particularly, a difficulty comes in connexion with the sale weight. A large proportion of coal is sold by canal, and the weight by canal is ascertained by measuring the displacement of the boat or barge in which the coal is put. And you will easily see that if the water is thick the displacement is so much less and the weight so much greater for an equal measurement as compared with what is the case when the water is clearer. So that the canal weight is a very uncertain figure, and the price is equally uncertain, so that in a sliding scale arrangement it is necessary to have regard to that.

5772. Why do you say that the price is uncertain?—Because in one case you may give 24 cwt. to the ton for 10*s.*, and in another case, quite inadvertently, or presumably inadvertently, give 26 cwt. to the ton for 10*s.*

5773. Do you happen to know that in the districts where sliding scales regulating wages in the coal trade have mostly prevailed they have taken the output of the colliery as the divisor?—I did not know that.

5774. The total output of the colliery is divided into the amount of money netted at the pit?—Yes; that would, of course, give a very fair average.

5775. Is there any other point on which you desire to offer evidence before my colleagues ask you questions?—I do not think there is.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

5776. Have the men approached you with a view to obtaining an eight-hour day from bank to bank?—No.

5777. Are they in favour of an eight-hour day from bank to bank in your district?—To some extent, but not very largely, I believe. I think it is fair to say that on the whole they are satisfied with the times as they now stand.

Mr. *Burt.*

5778. What are the hours now?—From 7 till 4.

5779. The hours from bank to bank?—From 7 in the morning till 4—it would be about half-past 4 when the last man gets out.

5780. You spoke of three-quarters of an hour being allowed for meals, does that mean that the pit stops working for that time?—Yes.

5781. And all the men and boys have an opportunity of availing themselves of that three-quarters of an hour?—Yes; you must not take it as three-quarters of an hour at every colliery. It is from 35 minutes to 45 minutes. In some cases it is three-quarters of an hour and in another 35 minutes.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till to-morrow morning at 11.30.

TWELFTH DAY.

Commission Room, Westminster Hall, Thursday, 19th November 1891.

PRESENT:

Mr. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

Mr. W. ABRAHAM, M.P.
Mr. G. BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.

Mr. E. TROW.
The Right Hon. A. J. MUNDELLA, M.P., Sir J. E. GORST, Q.C., M.P., The Right Hon. LEONARD COURTNEY, M.P., Mr. M. AUSTIN, and Mr. J. MAWDSLEY (Group C.) also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Joint Secretaries.

Mr. ENOCH REES called.

Chairman.

5782. It will be remembered that mention was made yesterday of Mr. Enoch Rees' inability to give the evidence he desires to lay before us in English. He has prepared and sent to the Commission a statement which gives in writing the evidence in chief which he desires to tender. It has been suggested to me by Mr. Abraham that probably the most convenient course would be for me to read this evidence, and in that case it would be probably only necessary to resort to an interpreter in our colleague Mr. Abraham for the purposes of examination. I will read the statement as if it were being stated by the witness himself. *(To the Witness.)* You are the secretary to the Anthracite Miners' Association?—Yes.

5783. The operations of that Association are conducted in the county of Carmarthenshire?—Yes.

5784. I shall now read your statement: "I "tender the following evidence on behalf of the "members of the Anthracite Miners' Association. "Out of 42 collieries in the district, 38 are "affiliated with the Association, which governs "the relations between employer and employed; "and although four of the collieries are not "connected with the Association, still the co-"operation and tranquillity existing between "masters and men are due to their following "the regulations of the Association. The mem-"bership of the Association at present is 3,500. "The members live in scattered and outlying "rural districts in three counties, namely, "Brecon, Glamorgan, and Carmarthenshire. 95 "per cent. of the members are Welshmen, who "speak, correspond, and conduct the business of "the Association at its monthly meetings in the "vernacular. I have worked underground as a "miner for 20 years, and for the last 10 have "occupied the position of secretary to the

Chairman—continued.

"above Association, so I have had ample oppor-"tunities of becoming acquainted with the "circumstances and opinions of the miners. The "dozens of strikes which occurred in our district "previous to the adoption of our sliding-scale "were the means of straining the relations be-"tween capital and labour, and while they meant "a considerable loss financially to employer and "employed, and gave rise to much undesirable "friction, they more directly affected the work-"men, owing to their poor circumstances and "weakness of organisation. Miners who live "in rural districts like ours are, as a rule, more "thrifty than those residing in urban districts, "and improve their circumstances by building "houses or keeping a cow or two. These strikes "were consequently more disastrous in their "consequences upon working classes in country "districts than in towns, often compelling those "in the former places to close their houses and "sell their cows, &c., and 'go on tramp,' as it is "commonly said, to find a living for themselves "and families. Seldom indeed could they pro-"cure employment in neighbouring collieries, "inasmuch as they were 'strikers' from another "district. In passing, I will give one instance "of a strike out of many I could cite. On the "first day of March 1880 the workmen came "out on strike at a colliery in Brynamman, "Carmarthenshire, a country place with a "population of about 2,000, and where the "tradespeople were mainly dependent upon the "miners. The workmen claimed an advance "of 3*s.* in the pound, the granting of which "would place them upon an equal basis with "other colliers, but as no kind of sliding-scale "existed, nor even a conciliatory board, to "regulate wages, and as the employers refused "to concede the men's claims the strike con-"tinued for 12 months and five days. This

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

5788. Was that a result of the negotiation between employers and workmen, and after the Miners' Union had been established in the district?—It was after the Association was formed that they were able to carry out the hours regularly.

5789. Are the hours now nine from bank to bank, or nine hours' actual work in the face?—Nine hours actually at work.

Mr. *Abraham.*

5790. Have the employers in your district carried out faithfully their part of the contract with the committee with respect to that agreement?—So far as prices go they have faithfully carried out the agreement, but they have failed to form their side of the board which was to be constituted by that agreement.

5791. Then by what means do you settle the disputes that now arise in that district?—Through our monthly meetings mostly.

5792. Have you any other plan in addition to your monthly meetings?—If the agent fails in negotiating with the employers we have three arbitrators appointed by our district, whose duty it is to meet the employers on questions of dispute.

5793. And as a rule, I suppose, they manage to settle matters?—In most cases they are able to settle.

5794. Have you felt any difficulties or inconvenience arising from the fact that you have no power of electing an umpire when the parties

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

fail to agree?—Yes, we have felt some difficulties in some of our cases from the want of an umpire.

5795. Have you a case at present in which you have asked for the aid of an umpire?—Yes, we have a case at present under the consideration of an umpire which has taken us many months to try to arrive at a settlement otherwise.

5796. In your opinion, whatever may be the decision of that umpire, will your men adhere to his decision loyally?—As far as precedents go they will accept the decision loyally.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

5797. The witness said that since the hours of labour were reduced the wages or earnings had not decreased. Has the rate of wages increased since that settlement was made—the rate itself?—As a rule the workmen earn more money now with short hours than they did when working 10 and 11 and 12 hours.

5798. But I want to know has the rate of wages per ton increased since that arrangement was made?—No.

Mr. *Dale.*

5799. I want to know whether this agreement of August the 24th, 1882, is still maintained as governing the relations of the parties?—Yes.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. GEORGE CALDWELL called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

5800. You are a director of the Moss Hall Coal Company, Limited?—Yes, and of two other companies.

5801. You are also a director of the Rainford Coal Company, Limited?—Yes.

5802. And a director also of the Westhoughton Coal and Cannel Company, Limited?—Yes.

5803. You are also ex-president of the South Lancashire and Cheshire Coal Association?—Yes.

5804. The Moss Hall Collieries are situated at Platt Bridge near Wigan in the West Lancashire district?—Yes.

5805. And the collieries of the Rainford Coal Company are situated also near Wigan?—Yes, St. Helens or Wigan.

5806. The collieries of the Westhoughton Company are situated on the boundary separating the West Lancashire district from what is known as the Manchester district?—Yes.

5807. The question sent out by the Commission were considered by the South Lancashire and Cheshire Coal Association in July last, and the members of that Association were invited to send in replies to those questions. Those replies

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

have been tabulated, as I understand, and have been answered by the West Lancashire division, I suppose I may call it, of the South Lancashire and Cheshire Association?—Yes; by three of the divisions, but West Lancashire more particularly I speak for.

5808. By West and North, and by the Manchester district?—Yes.

5809. Do those three districts complete, as it were, the area of the South Lancashire and Cheshire Association?—Yes. The Ashton district has not sent any replies, but it is only a small district, and does not interfere very much, if any, with the matter.

5810. About how many persons are employed in coal mining in the West Lancashire district?—The output for Lancashire and Cheshire for 1890, according to the Government return, was 22,801,178 tons.

5811. That is the output for the South Lancashire and Cheshire area?—Yes; and the number of persons employed at the collieries of the West Lancashire district, according to the report of Mr. Hall, Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines, was 38,522 in the year 1890.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

months, when the men were asking for an advance of wages.

5830. Do you mean a strike throughout the whole of the West Lancashire district?—A strike throughout the whole of Lancashire and Yorkshire, practically.

5831. Did you say that was in March 1880?—I did not say it was in March 1880.

5832. Then it was in 1880?—It was January and February 1881.

5833. Perhaps that is rather remote from our inquiry to go into fully. But one would like your more recent experience?—There have been really no strikes except two cases, August 1884 when wages were reduced 10 per cent, and March 1890 when 5 per cent. advance was given—I have not got the statement here—but they were only for a few days, just while the charges were under discussion. You could scarcely call them strikes. Practically there has been no strike since 1881, and that was a two months' strike. I think I may as well, perhaps, refer to that strike in 1881, because, although it seems a long way back, practically it was the basis which altered the standard of wages very considerably all over the country. In January and February 1881 there was a nine weeks' strike for an advance of wages and against contracting out of the Employers' Liability Act and for weekly pays. Weekly pays were eventually conceded on the understanding that the men would work 12 days per fortnight when required. No advance was granted.

5834. You do not refer to the Employers' Liability Act?—It was really a strike for an advance of wages; but they made it also a point that they should not be compelled to contract out of the Act at the time; and to obtain weekly pays. Previously to that pays had been made fortnightly, but we conceded the weekly pays and the other two points: the advance of wages was not given, but the Employers' Liability Act was contracted out of. Generally I may state that, although they demurred very much to contracting out of the Employers' Liability Act, yet it was not so much a question of contracting out of the Act as for the advance of wages and weekly pays that the strike took place. In our own case we allowed our men just to do as they liked; they could contract out or not as they thought proper. At most collieries in the district they were asked to contract out of the Act and did so. In nine cases out of ten I think there were only two or three exceptions where the men were allowed to please themselves whether they contracted out of the Act or not, but in our own case we allowed that state of things to go on for 12 months, and the men were allowed to please themselves: and during that time first one man came to us and then another, asking us to take their contributions towards the Permanent Relief Fund. We consented, and in a few cases—only a few cases—the men came forward in the first instance because they were rather shy about it, as they had made, as they thought, such a fight against it; but in reality the fight was not against that, but for the advance of wages. I am just pointing out this to you, because in our own case our men kept coming, first one and then another, until three or four months after the time nearly one half of our men at their own request wished to pay their contributions to the Permanent Relief Fund, and voluntarily contracted out of the Act, and at the end of 12 months three-fourths of our men voluntarily contracted out of the Act. It became rather a nuisance to the clerks in the office to have to keep accounts for the men in and men out, and we had a pretty good idea that the men really wanted to come in, although shy at asking, and we said, "You ought "either all to come in or all to go out," and they all came in and contracted voluntarily out of the Act. All contracted voluntarily out of the Act. Therefore, as I said before, the objection to the contracting out of the Act was more of a blind for the advance of wages, and more at the instigation and the demand of another district outside than from our own district. It was the Yorkshire district really that prompted the men in West Lancashire to stand out for this advance of wages, and this question of contracting out of the Employers' Liability Act was made a peg to hang the strike on.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

5835. Then speaking of your West Lancashire district, and not merely of the collieries with which you yourself are associated, within that district, may we take it that the great majority of the men employed at the collieries are now members of the Permanent Relief Fund?—In almost all cases, I think, with the exception of about two or three in West Lancashire, they are all in.

5836. Do the owners contribute 25 per cent. of the men's contributions?—Yes; they pay 25 per cent. in some cases—in all cases where they contract out of the Act; but in other cases, where the men are not asked to contract out of the Act, then they pay 15 per cent., but that is merely voluntary; they could stop it if they chose.

5837. Therefore there may be a membership on the part of the men employed, of the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund, either on the basis of contracting out of the Act, or on the basis of not so contracting?—Yes.

5838. What are the hours of underground men, particularly hewers, in West Lancashire?—Eight, nine, and ten: any collier is at liberty to come up most of the pits in West Lancashire any time after 2 o'clock. That is a statement of the hours for West Lancashire (*handing in a statement*).

5839. Your official answer is: "Colliers and "underground hands eight, nine, and ten hours "per day. Descend pit between 5 and 6 a.m., "and are at liberty to come up at most of the "collieries any time after 2 p.m." ?—That is so.

5840. "At some collieries 3 p.m. is the hour "fixed. Day hands 10 hours a day." These enumerated hours—eight, nine, and ten per day—do you consider they represent from bank to bank?—Yes.

5841. Is that the sense in which they are to be understood?—Yes. That means this, you know: colliers are allowed to come up any time

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

showing all the various hands employed at a colliery (*handing in a statement*). That is a statement for one particular colliery, but we may take it, I think, as representative of the whole district. I have also got a statement here of colliers' shifts worked and lost at representative collieries in the West Lancashire district (*handing in a statement*). I can tell you the gist of it in very short terms.

5861. If you please?—It shows that there is an average in the earlier years, 1880, 1881, and so on, of perhaps about 10 per cent. of absentees daily. The average is pretty much the same all through those years of depression, but when you get to 1889 and 1890, when wages got higher, the per-centage of absentees increased immensely, so much so that what was 10 per cent. in 1880 became 18 and 19 per cent. in one case in 1890. I have taken out the average from various collieries for the year 1891, and one is 18·01; another is 19; another is 16·34; another is 17·45; another is 15·35. On looking at the statement you will see I have separated the years ending with 1889, showing a total number of possible shifts at representative collieries of 2,093,525. The shifts worked were only 88·84 per cent., and the shifts lost were 11·16 per cent., whereas when you come to 1890 and 1891, after the wages advanced, out of 902,920 possible shifts, the shifts worked were 83·52 per cent., and the shifts lost 16·48 per cent. On this point I wish to correct a statement in the West Lancashire answers at the bottom of page 3, where it says: "It will be seen that during the present "year the absentees amounted to 18 per cent. "and 20 per cent. of the colliers employed at the "collieries in question." Although some of the figures at that time when we had these answers before us showed 18 and 20 per cent., yet when the figures are all put together the average is found to be only 16·48. You will observe the per-centage of shifts lost previously to 1889, when the wages were low, averaged 11·16, but in 1890 and 1891, after the wages increased so much, the per-centage of absentees became 16·48—just about half as much again. The same kind of thing happened in 1873, I remember.

5862. Have you any other point on which you wish to proffer evidence before being subjected to examination?—I do not think that I have.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

5863. In your district you have no board of conciliation and no system of sliding-scale, have you?—No.

5864. I see in your replies you state that you think the adoption of a sliding-scale and the establishment of a board of conciliation is desirable?—Yes. We made efforts in that direction (as I explained before) some few years back, but they came to nothing.

5865. Did you attempt to establish a board of conciliation. I did not hear you say that?—No, not quite that, but a conciliatory board was

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

mentioned. The proposed agreement reads: "This sliding-scale and conciliatory board, as "now agreed upon, shall remain in force till De-"cember 31st, 1885, and to be then terminable "by either Association on giving the other three "months previous notice in writing, or otherwise "shall remain in force until terminated by "similar notice, to expire at the end of any "ensuing three months." These agreements were not signed, but alterations were suggested afterwards which we could not agree to.

5866. That is to say, a board of conciliation formed part of the proposal to establish a sliding-scale?—Yes.

5867. The disputes in your district, however, have not been very numerous?—Not large disputes, but there are constantly little disputes going on.

5868. Are those little disputes principally concerned with the rate of wages?—Yes.

5869. And of wages in the different collieries?—Yes. For instance, if you want to open out a mine which has not been at work for some time, but which you can open out again because the times are better, you will have a great difficulty in fixing the standard rate of wages, and sometimes it is a long time before you can get the price fixed at which the men shall work. There are various disputes of that sort.

5870. When an alteration in wages takes place, what is the procedure? Do you on your side give notice if there is to be a reduction, and do the men on their side request an advance if they think they are entitled to an advance?—Yes, and then we meet to consider.

5871. And have the variations in wages in your district, generally speaking, corresponded to the variations in other districts?—Since 1880 very much so. Previously to that each district made arrangements within themselves, but after 1880 the Miners' Federations became established, and then the Coal Associations had to cover the same ground that the Miners' Federation did.

5872. I think you said that wages had advanced more than in proportion to the advance in the selling price of coal?—Yes.

5873. Supposing you had a sliding-scale in operation, would that have been the case?—I daresay not. When prices are going up, of course the colliers get the better of us; when prices are coming down I suppose the reverse operation will apply.

5874. In general a sliding-scale would be so arranged as to give an advance of wages when there was an advance of price?—Yes.

5875. But not quite a corresponding advance?—Probably that would be so.

5876. I think that is so with the sliding-scales of other districts?—I think that is, no doubt, one reason why the sliding-scale fell through, as the men were under the impression at that time that the wages would go up, and that they could command better terms from the proprietors without the sliding-scale than with it.

5877. They would then be, perhaps, more ready to entertain a proposal for a sliding-scale

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

ing apparatus?—No, I do not think you could, not in West Lancashire.

5902. Would an eight hours' day materially increase the cost of production?—Very materially.

5903. And therefore in times of depression its introduction would probably lead to the closing of a good many collieries?—No doubt it would, and very soon too.

5904. Now, you have told us that the number of absentees increases very considerably in times of good trade, when wages are high?—Yes.

5905. Do you think, supposing an eight hours' day were established, that the result of that might not be so far to increase the regularity of attendance as to make up for the diminution in the number of hours worked each day?—It might do; but my experience of colliers is that they like a day or two a week under any circumstances.

5906. You think that even if the deficiency was to some extent made up in that way, it would not be fully made up?—It would not be fully made up. During times of depression they still have their holidays, as you see by one of the statements I put in, because even in the very worst periods there was 9 per cent. and 10 per cent. of absentees when the wages were at their lowest.

5907. Have your men ever approached you with the view of obtaining an eight hours' day?—They are frequently talking about it, but we have had no regular organised demand.

Mr. *Burt.*

5908. You said that although you had had no general strike since 1881, you had very frequent small disputes?—Yes.

5909. Do they often result in strikes?—Yes, very frequently.

5910. And have they been mostly if not wholly connected with questions of wage?—Yes, of one sort or another.

5911. Have you had any?—Yes.

5912. I mean have you ever had any strikes for a reduction of hours?—No.

5913. With regard to the strike of 1881, I understood you to say that was mainly in your opinion a dispute about the rate of wages?—It was, and weekly pays.

5914. And that the question of contracting out of the Employers' Liability Act was a sort of pretext which was put forward?—Yes.

5915. You mentioned that in the case of your own collieries the men were at liberty to go on with their employment without contracting out of the Act?—Yes.

5916. But that after a time they came to you individually and in considerable numbers to ask that their contributions to the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund might be kept off?—Yes.

5917. Did that mean that by having their subscriptions kept off they were to contract out of the Act?—We did not bind them at all; we did not ask them to do so.

5918. Then they might have been members

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

of the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund so far as your collieries were concerned without contracting out of the Act?—Yes, we should simply have saved our contribution of 25 per cent. to the Permanent Relief Fund, and we should have insured in an assurance society.

5919. As I understood you, you mentioned that at the present time there are cases where miners may not contract out of the Act, and where owners will pay 15 per cent. instead of 25 per cent. to the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund?—Yes, there are two cases, I believe, in the Wigan district; Colonel Blundell's is one. He gives 15 per cent. and has done all along, but it is a purely voluntary contribution, and he need not do it. I think he has had one or two cases where questions of accident have arisen, but I am not aware that any of them have come before the courts.

5920. You said that there is no pressure whatever put upon the men to induce or compel them to contract out of the Employers' Liability Act in Lancashire?—When the colliers apply for work, they take it as a matter of course that they do contract out of the Act.

5921. Is that made in any way a condition of employment?—There are conditions of employment at every colliery, and any man who applies is offered a copy of the conditions, and he goes to his work with that in his hand. This is a print of the conditions (*handing in a print*).

5922. And at the same collieries one condition is that he should contract out of the Employers' Liability Act?—Yes, undoubtedly.

5923. Is that not pressure?—Well, it is in a sense; but it is pressure to which I think they are quite willing to agree. It is universal in the district, and I am quite sure, as I said before, that the men generally would be discontented if the Permanent Relief Fund were not in existence.

Mr. *Dale.*

5924. Can it be said to be universal, when you mention to us that at certain collieries in the district they may not?—But they pay to the Permanent Relief Fund in those cases even.

5925. I know; but I thought Mr. Burt's question to you had reference to contracting out of the Act?—Well, they are not bound to contract out of the Act in those conditions, and there are no conditions of service to that effect.

5926. Therefore it would be incorrect to say that it is universally the practice in the district to make it a condition of employment that the men should contract out of the Act?—There are two or three exceptions, I think, in the district; that is about all I know of.

Mr. *Burt.*

5927. Would this be a correct way of putting it: that it is a condition of employment that the workman should be a member of the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

5928. And that being a member of the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund he must contract out of the Act?—That is it.

Mr. *Dale.*

5929. Except in two cases?—Well, very few cases.

Mr. *Burt.*

5930. With regard to the hours of labour, you have stated that they are eight, nine, and ten per day, that is so far as the coal-getters are concerned, as I understand?—Yes.

5931. You have also said that those who descend the pit between 5 and 6 may come up at any time after 2?—Yes, in most cases; I believe here and there that there are about three or four collieries where the men are required to stop down till 3, but they are exceptional cases.

5932. But in most cases the colliers are at liberty to come up out of the pit after 2 o'clock?—Yes.

5933. So that that would mean little more than eight hours in the pit?—Yes, the last man going down and the first man coming up, if he were one and the same person, would have just eight hours.

5934. I understood you to say that there had not been any united or organised application made by the miners for an eight hours day?—No, we have heard of it in the papers and so on, and the men have been continually talking about it; but we have had no special demand that I am aware of.

Mr. *Trow.*

5935. Do you employ females in your district?—Yes.

5936. Are the number of females included in the return you have sent us of 38,522 persons employed?—Yes, I can give you the numbers: there are 191 girls from 13 to 16 years of age, and 1,446 women above 16. I am now taking the figures from the Inspector's report for West Lancashire.

5937. What wages do these females earn on the average?—This list that I have got here does not seem to give it. They vary from 1*s.* to 2*s.* per day. The younger girls gets 1*s.*, and the older girls up to 2*s.* per day. I am speaking from memory.

5938. And how many hours do they work?—They just work the number of hours prescribed by the Mines Regulation Act.

5939. I see you give the miner as working eight and three-quarter hours?—That would be about the average.

5940. Then it is stated that from 50 to 90 minutes are allowed for meal-times; is that time included in the eight and three-quarter hours?—Yes.

5941. That is included in it?—It is included. As I told you before, the pit starts winding at 6 o'clock and leaves off at 2; any time after 2 the colliers are at liberty to come up.

5942. And they cease work at 1 on Saturday?—Yes.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

5943. Would the employers be prepared to discuss the question of the eight hours if the men brought it before you?—I suppose we shall have to do; we are entirely the servants of the men at the present moment, and we have to do just as we are bid.

5944. But it is stated in these replies, "Miners underground work about 45 hours per week"?—That is what they could work, but they do not.

5945. If the men came to discuss the question with you as to the 48 hours per week I suppose you would not raise any objection to it?—No, we should not; we should be very glad.

5946. The evidence we have is that for underground men 48 hours per week are worked?—We should be very glad of 48 hours per week, or something less than that.

5947. That is exclusive of meal-times, so that you would gain by it?—We should, immensely.

5948. Now with regard to this contracting out of the Act, we have been led to understand in various other districts that it was compulsory?—There is no grievance about it, at any rate; you may call it compulsory if you like, but it is mutually agreed upon between masters and men that it should be so.

5949. You stated in the replies which you sent in that in January and February 1881 there was "a nine weeks' strike for an advance "of wages and against contracting out of the "Employers' Liability Act"?—Literally that was correct; but, as I said before, it was mainly a strike for the advance of wages and the other was only imported into it for other purposes.

5950. You see this is your own statement?—Yes, and I am quite willing to abide by it.

5951. If you were not endeavouring at that time to force the men to contract out of the Act, why have you yourselves put that clause in these replies?—We are quite willing to abide by that statement; it is a full explanation of the causes of the strike.

5952. Yes, but you have stated more than once that it is voluntary by the men, and yet here is a strike of nine weeks' duration, and this is one of the causes of the strike?—There was a show of opposition, there is no doubt.

5953. But the fact is you were endeavouring to force the men to contract out of the Act?—We were forcing them to do what we believed was for their own interest, and what they had agreed to do in fact through their delegates.

5954. Coming to this last matter, which is one that I am more interested in, that is the formation of a conciliation board; you are entirely in favour of a conciliation board, are you not?—Yes.

5955. Would you have it based upon the principle that an umpire should be selected, or a president to preside over it in case you failed to agree among yourselves?—That is a part of our proposal.

5956. And in addition to that you would have a sliding-scale?—Yes. We did not believe quite in the board of conciliation, but we assented to it at the finish.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

5957. In giving the statement with regard to the advances and reductions, I gathered that you have no standard rate prevailing in your district?—We have what we call a field price, which generally applies all over the district; but of course every mine has its own field price.

5958. You said that one 10 per cent. advance came to 11 per cent.?—Yes, these advances are all cumulative.

5959. That is, they are cumulative advances on the then existing rates of wages, not based on any standard rate at a given time?—Exactly.

5960. That means that in going up the men get a little benefit?—Yes.

5961. But in coming down you are recouped?—We are recouped and a bit more.

5962. Because the reduction is based on the higher sum?—Yes; but it works in this way: that we do not get as many reductions as they get advances, so that it rectifies itself in that way.

5963. Would you be prepared (in the case of a conciliation board being formed and a scale) to fix a standard rate?—That would be a matter for negotiation at the time. The sliding-scale fell through on the discussion about the basis, and I presume the same difficulty will again arise if the question comes up again.

5964. But your idea of a scale is that there should be a standard rate fixed and that all reductions or advances should be based upon that?—I do not say so. I do not wish to bind my Association in any particular. They would be glad to consider the question with the men whenever it arises.

5965. But you say a sliding-scale, provided a proper and fair basis could be agreed upon?—Yes, exactly.

5966. Then if you have a proper and fair basis, how will you work it unless you have a standard to work from and a basis rate?—That is a matter for discussion at the time when the question arises, and I do not quite see how we can discuss that now.

5967. I only want your opinion?—I am not prepared to give you my opinion until that time arrives. I am speaking now for the Lancashire and Cheshire Coal Association, and I am not altogether giving you my own opinion, but I am here as representative of the West Lancashire District of that Association.

5968. I should like you to explain how this proper and fair basis is to be worked out unless you have a standard rate?—There was no end of discussion about it at the time.

Mr. *Dale.*

5969. I think that is rather a matter of detail. What we are chiefly concerned is to know what is the feeling of the coal-owners in West Lancashire in regard to a system partly by sliding-scale and partly by a conciliation board of averting causes of strife?—Exactly.

Mr. *Trow.*

5970. And I understand that the reply is that they are in favour of a conciliation board, and a sliding-scale?—Yes, if a proper basis can be settled.

Mr. *Dale.*

5971. Just in that connexion I would like to ask you whether you consider that a conciliation board or a joint committee is inseparable from a sliding-scale—might it not exist without a sliding-scale?—Yes, we should prefer it to exist without. We do not want the joint committee, we do not want a conciliation board either, we should prefer to have the sliding scale pure and simple, if we could have it.

5972. In answer to our question, "Can you "suggest any means of avoiding or arranging "strikes, and promoting cordial relations "between capital and labour," the West Lancashire Association says, "A sliding-scale "(provided a proper and fair basis could be "agreed upon), and a board of conciliation con-"sisting of representatives of employers and "men, with an independent chairman, to see "that the sliding-scale is carried out properly, "and to arrange any minor matters of diffe-"rence"?—Yes.

5973. Do you connect the appointment of such a board of conciliation necessarily with a sliding-scale?—I connect it necessarily simply in this way: that I do not think we could arrange with the men without that.

5974. Without which?—Without the conciliation. I think we should have to admit that to satisfy the men; but as regards the masters, I think the masters would be satisfied with a sliding scale pure and simple.

5975. The owner's preference would be for a sliding-scale pure and simple?—Yes.

5976. But would you anticipate that the men would desire to associate with the adoption of any sliding-scale a board of conciliation, and to that would you assent for the sake of the sliding-scale?—Yes.

Mr. *Abraham.*

5977. I suppose these returns have been made with your sanction, knowledge, and authority?—Yes, entirely.

5978. And I suppose we are to assume that Mr. Maskell William Peace knew well what he was talking about, and what you were writing about?—I think I can answer with regard to that statement; Mr. Peace knew nothing at all about it.

5979. I am talking about the return signed by Mr. Peace. He knew the facts of the case when he drew up these replies?—Of course.

5980. Then, when he said, "January and "February 1881, nine weeks strike for an "advance of wages, and against contracting out "of the Employers' Liability Act, and for "weekly pays," he knew it was right?—I say it is right. I do not dispute it for one moment.

5981. Then there was a strike against contracting, out of the Employers' Liability Act?—

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

Yes. The miners representatives agreed with the men to contract out of the Act in our district before, but they were influenced by the delegates from Yorkshire, and it was the Yorkshire delegates who really caused the strike in West Lancashire.

5982. But there was a strike of nine weeks' duration against it, by the men affected?—I should say that that was only a pretext, the strike was really for an advance of wages.

5983. Then Mr. Peace is not right?—No, I do not say so. I say that Mr. Peace is perfectly right, but I gave you a rider to that.

5984. Will you kindly inform us when the Employers' Liability Act came into force?—I think it was 1873.

5985. The Employers' Liability Act?—I cannot speak to that quite from memory—that is not the date. I was thinking of the Mines Regulation Act.

5986. You have put in a statement showing the conditions of employment; are they conditions of employment in the Association with which you are connected?—Not for the South Lancashire and Cheshire Coal Association, but they are for collieries in West Lancashire generally; some do not contract out, as I have just explained.

5987. Are these the conditions in any colliery that you are acquainted with?—Yes.

5988. They are?—Yes.

5989. And this is a correct print of the rules, in fact?—Every man who applies for work takes one of those.

5990. And they read thus: "Conditions of "employment at the collieries and works of the "Garswood Hall Colliery Company, Limited." "1. The persons employed at the colliery, "directly or indirectly, must be, and continue "to be, during such employment, ordinary "members of the Lancashire and Cheshire "Miners' Permanent Relief Society, under its "present or any future name." Is that right?—Yes, that is right.

5991. "2. The persons directly employed at "the colliery are engaged for an indefinite "period determinable upon ( ) notice"?—Yes.

5992. "3. The employer shall be and continue "to be an honorary member of the said society, "and shall subscribe thereto not less than 25 "per cent. on the amount paid by the ordinary "members and half-members employed directly "or indirectly at that colliery. 4. In considera-"tion of such payment by the employer and of "being employed at these works under these "conditions, and as part of the terms of employ-"ment, every person so employed undertakes for "himself and his representatives, and any per-"son entitled in case of his death, to look to the "funds of the said society alone under the rules "and constitution thereof for compensation in "case of injury sustained in the course of such "employment, whether resulting in death or "not; and that neither the employer nor any "other person in his employment, whether a "fellow-servant or not, shall be liable in respect "of any defect, negligence, act, or omission "under the Employers' Liability Act of 1880 or "otherwise in respect of any negligence occa-"sioning such injury." Those are the conditions of employment at the collieries?—Yes.

5993. When were they enforced?—They have been enforced ever since 1880.

5994. They were enforced immediately after the Employers' Liability Act was capable of being enforced?—They were enforced after that dispute, but you must bear in mind that that was very carefully considered, and it was necessary to have conditions of service drawn up like that in order to make yourself perfectly sure that no actions would be brought against you which could be sustained.

5995. That I am not so much concerned with. I want to know the effect with respect to this, whether the word "must" here is to be understood in the ordinary sense of the word must?—I would give you my answer to that——

5996. These are the conditions of employment?—Those are the conditions of employment.

5997. No one can be employed without accepting these?—No; but I must state that they were drawn up by agreement with Mr. William Pickard, who at that time was the miners' representative for Lancashire; there was an agreement made with him on behalf of the men by the masters.

5998. And afterwards repudiated by the men themselves?—At the instance, as I said before, of another county, who wanted to bring our men in West Lancashire out.

5999. But it was repudiated by the men themselves?—Naturally, as I said before, it was a mere pretext.

6000. There was a nine weeks' strike?—Yes.

6001. You have made reference to some collieries where it was optional for the men to join this fund; you said, I think, that after a time, when three-fourths of the men had joined, it became such a trouble to the clerks that you caused the men either to come in altogether or to go out altogether?—Yes.

6002. But there were three-fourths of the men in the society at the time?—Yes. I have no doubt all would have come in, in fact they all wanted to come in; there was no mistake about that, or else we should not have put it in that shape.

6003. And in consequence of your putting it in that shape the one-fourth who had not joined did join?—Yes.

6004. Of course the mild pressure used to gain the end in view—— ?—You may call it pressure; we did not care then, and I do not care now whether it is done or not.

6005. But that was the fact?—It was the fact. We could contract out of the Act by insuring for very much less money.

6006. You made a statement with respect to the number of shifts lost, and the hours lost, was there any special object in putting that in?—Yes, very clearly—to show that there was a great irregularity of work and that the colliery

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

proprietors were sufferers thereby—that it was not merely a question so much of an advance in wages, because this was something over and above the advance in wages. In reality the number of shifts lost had increased the cost very much. There cannot be 16 per cent. of absentees at a colliery without increasing the cost very materially. On some days of the week there is no doubt but that that 16 per cent. is quite 20 per cent.—the day after making up day for instance.

6007. During the depressed times which you have referred to, were very many days lost then?—There were 10 per cent. of absentees.

6008. Were there many days lost—— ?—That gives you the answer.

6009. Were there many days lost from no fault of the men?—In the cases that I have given to you the returns are made from those days only on which the pit was open for work.

6010. But during the depressed times were there not many days when the pit was not open for work?—No doubt. I have put in a statement to the Chairman showing how the 365 days in each of two years are made up, how many were work days, how many were play days, and how many holidays there were of various kinds.

6011. Do the men have to come to the mine in the morning sometimes and go back again without working?—Never in our case; never in any case that I have had to do with.

6012. Have you a rule that you give notice to the men before?—Yes; but the men are not quite so considerate towards us, I may say.

6013. I am just asking you for the fact?—I put the reverse, which is also a fact.

6014. You may make any comment you like, but I am more concerned with the facts than probably with comments. With regard to the deductions you say in the replies you have sent in that there are deductions for "weekly subscriptions to Miners' Permanent Relief Society, it is 4*d.* and 5*d.* alternately weekly, or 4½*d.* per week, and a charge for the sharpening of colliers' picks, which is also 4*d.* and 5*d.* alternately, and 6*d.* per week per collier, and 3*d.* per week for daywagemen (underground) for use of a lamp, including oil,"; are we to understand that these men have to pay 6*d.* per week for the sharpening of their tools?—No, it is 4*d.* and 5*d.* alternately.

6015. What is meant then by this, "and 6*d.* per week per collier"?—That is for the lamp and oil.

6016. Then they pay for sharpening the tools they use, in your reply, 4*d.* and 5*d.* alternately?—Yes.

6017. 4*d.* one week, 5*d.* another week?—Yes.

6018. For sharpening the tools?—Yes.

6019. How is that deducted?—It is deducted from their wages.

6020. Is that the case now?—Yes.

6021. Then is the 6*d.* per week for lamp and oil deducted in the same way?—Yes, in many cases, practically in all, they are paid their full wages at one window and they pay their stoppages at another window.

6022. Are we to understand that the use of a lamp and oil costs the miners of West Lancashire 26*s.* each per annum?—Yes.

6023. The use of the lamp?—And the oil.

6024. The use of the lamp and oil?—Yes.

6025. The use of a lamp and oil costs these men 26*s.* each per annum?—Yes, and it costs us for the men attending to the cleaning of the lamps and things of that kind a very great deal more than the cost of the oil itself.

6026. With regard to the hours of labour, is there any rule after 2 o'clock by which the men are allowed to come up; is it necessary for a number of men to congregate before they are allowed to come up; or is each man allowed to come up as he comes to the bottom of the pit?—Well, if there is any coal to wind at the pit bottom we should require a cagefnl of men to come up certainly.

6027. That is what I want to know; how many would that be?—Eight; in some cases 10 or 12.

6028. I suppose you have a rule?—Yes.

6029. Will you kindly state the rule?—There are various rules; at various collieries it is practically that.

6030. Well, give us an approximate idea?—They are expected to have a cage full; we should not wind one man up; it is not likely.

6031. So after 2 o'clock if one man came at 10 minutes past 2 and there was not a cage full till 4, he would have to wait?—Yes, but there would be no need to wait till 4; it is not the case with them.

6032. You said that some men stayed till 4?—Exactly, but out of a pit set of men no man need wait more than five minutes.

6033. What was that?—With a pit set full of men no man if he came to the pit bottom would need to wait more than five minutes, because there would be a cage full in five minutes.

6034. But if a man came there after you had raised the men up and you had commenced rewinding coals and there was not a cage full there for an hour or two, he would be kept there until you have a cage full?—No doubt he would, but in practice that does not apply, because they come up in large numbers very shortly after 2.

6035. That does not alter the aspect of my question, I believe?—Well, you are putting a case which does not apply in practice.

6036. I do not think so?—But I am sure so.

6037. I have known it to my own sorrow?—I am speaking of West Lancashire.

6038. I have no indications by these answers that the employers in Lancashire are any better, if as good, as the employers in Wales?—I would concede that point.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

6039. With regard to the strike at the beginning of 1881, were there other collieries

Mr. *Mawdsley*—continued.

6063. Probably reaching a day and a half per week on an average?—Yes, two days a week in many cases.

6064. What do the employers do with those men?—Nothing, they let them go their own way; we cannot control them; we have no power to control them. We have no associations to put against theirs, and they are masters of the situation entirely.

6065. Do you take no steps; do you do nothing in the way of punishment or fines or anything of that sort with men who lose time like that?—No; we are situated in West Lancashire in this way, we are very different to any other district that I know of. There are a great many collieries which are so close together, in fact some collieries work coals under the same sod and under the same area, and if we said anything to a man, he would simply go to the next colliery and find employment there; therefore we just let them do as they like; we have no control over them whatever.

6066. How do you get at this 16 per cent. is it an estimate on a record of actual facts from the books of the colliery?—It is an actual record from the books of several collieries, eight different collieries, I think.

6067. Have you eliminated the stoppages for the days when a man is off sick, or have you included those in the lost time?—I could not do otherwise than that. Those records are only for the days on which the pit is worked; they do not include holidays and other days of that kind.

6068. But, as matter of fact, you have included all men who are off, even if they were off sick?—Yes; we have no means of knowing that.

6069. You have no means of knowing that they are off sick?—No.

6070. So that at any rate a certain proportion of them would be off sick?—Yes, no doubt.

6071. And that would to some extent, perhaps to a small extent, reduce this 16 per cent?—Yes, a very small per-centage.

6072. Does this stopping off of work increase the costs of production?—Very largely indeed. We have the same datal wages to pay, we have the same staff charges and all the machinery and fuel consumed at the works all going on, whether the quantity coming out is little or much.

6073. Have you never taken into consideration the advisability of insisting upon more regular attention to work?—We have thought about it many times, but it is no use; we cannot help ourselves; we are entirely in the hands of the Miners' Union; we have no control whatever.

Mr. *Courtney.*

6074. You have several times told us, I understand, that it would be cheaper for you to make a contract with the Employers' Liability Insurance Company than to contribute this 25 per cent.?—Yes, it is done in two or three cases with that view, at least I will not say altogether with that view, but at any rate it is done.

Mr. *Courtney*—continued.

6075. And there is a feeling on the part of some at least of the workmen against contracting out of the Act?—I do not think there is in West Lancashire. I think they are all agreeable to it. I have never heard of anyone against it.

6076. It nominally caused a strike at a certain number of collieries?—It was a pretext, as I said before. Why should the men at our colliery continue their strike for two months when we did not make it a condition. There was no condition of that kind at the colliery with which I am connected, and yet there was a strike. The strike was practically for an advance of wages and weekly pays.

6077. Even supposing no feeling exists about the subject why should you insist upon forcing a benefit upon the men?—It was done for the men's own advantage and by arrangement with Mr. Pickard, who was then the representative of the miners in West Lancashire He agreed to it, and was very anxious indeed to have it carried out. If it had not been for an agreement with him to that effect we should never have tried to enforce it.

6078. That may be quite historically accurate; but if it is made a pretext now or a ground of complaint, what is the benefit of your forcing it upon them?—I do not know that it is. In some cases, I think, they would be very glad to have that force taken away, only there is a feeling that it would be unfavourable to the men if it were taken away.

6079. Would any complaint be raised against you if you changed your tactics?—No, I should not be at all averse.

6080. Would it be to your pecuniary advantage?—Yes.

6081. And yet you will not do it?—Because it is the practice in the district. Our men would come to us as they did before, and they would say, "Will you take our money." I know that would be the result, and there would be dissatisfaction if our men were not in the Permanent Relief Society. There was a good deal of dissatisfaction before, and I should not like to see the same kind of thing occur again.

6082. But that was before the Employers' Liability Act was passed?—No, it was at the same time, before the last Employers' Act was passed; there was an Employers' Liability Act before that, was there not?

6083. There has been only one. I am only acquainted with one. What Act are you referring to? If it was before the Employers' Liability Act then, that answer of yours loses its weight, because the dissatisfaction expressed by your workmen was expressed before the Employers' Liability Act was passed?—It was in 1880. When the Employers' Liability Act was passed I cannot say. It would be about the same time.

6084. I will not pursue that subject any further. Have you been in the coal industry for a long while?—Forty-four years.

6085. Have there been changes in the hours

Mr. *Courtney*—continued.

of labour during that time?—Yes, they do not work so long now as they formerly did, by a long way.

6086. There have been reductions made?—Yes.

6087. Are the habits of punctuality improving or retrograding?—It all depends upon whether the wages are high or low; they are retrograde in times of high wages; in fact it is a matter of the collier earning just as much money as will keep him per week; anything above that he spends in lost time.

6088. But take the same condition of things, supposing there are bad times now, and supposing there were bad times 30 years ago, would the unpunctuality now be greater or less than it was 30 years ago?—Very much greater.

6089. In fact it is going to the worse instead of going to the good?—Yes. I can remember when colliers were the same as the employés in other trades; if they did not attend to their work they were told to go about their business; but we cannot enforce that discipline now.

6090. For lack of discipline punctuality is getting worse?—Yes.

6091. You have no board of conciliation?—No.

6092. You have no organised method of bringing employers and employed or their representatives together?—No.

6093. Do you think the representatives of the employed, if they could be got together, would confess that this unpunctuality was an evil?—I do not know whether they would confess that it was an evil or not; they would confess that they do it; they would confess that they do absent themselves.

6094. They would not think, in the interests of the body of workmen that they represent that it was a thing which ought to be corrected?—I do not think they would study that for one moment.

6095. It has not been tried?—No, and there is no possibility of trying it.

6096. It is a hard word to say anything is impossible?—It is.

6097. Have you ever brought the people together and made the experiment?—Well, we tried to come together, as I explained before, by attempting to get a sliding-scale.

6098. How did that break off?—We could not fix upon the basis.

Mr. *Courtney*—continued.

6099. How long did you negotiate?—A couple of years.

6100. Who were negotiating?—The colliery proprietors of West Lancashire and the miners delegates.

6101. How many on each side?—Thirteen, I think it was; and the question of basis was to be referred to Mr. Gully, the Recorder of Wigan.

6102. It became impossible to come to any agreement?—Yes.

6103. Are there any special circumstances in West Lancashire differentiating it from the Eastern Counties, the Tyne counties?—Yes, very much.

6104. Which made that impossible in one case which was possible in the other?—Yes.

6105. What are they?—In other districts the collieries are in isolated districts, not near any large towns generally, and each have their own class of men dependent upon the collieries as they have in Northumberland, where they find houses. But in West Lancashire, where there are plenty of houses for them to go into, they skip about from one house to another, and from one colliery to another, and there being so many collieries in the same neighbourhood, they change about as often as two or three times sometimes in a week.

6106. Collieries are not so near one another in other parts of the country?—No.

6107. But although they are separated the miners are more organised than they are in West Lancashire?—The miners are well organised in West Lancashire, but the colliery proprietors are not. Every colliery is differently fixed. The Wigan district, where the largest quantity of coal is got, is equidistant between Liverpool and Manchester, two great towns, and the collieries nearer Manchester, for instance, do not like the Wiganers to take their produce into Manchester, and the collieries nearer Liverpool do not like the Manchester produce being taken to Liverpool, so in that way the Wiganers are between two stools, and they have to fight as best they can, both for the selling of the coal in the market and as to the wages for the men too.

6108. There is a want of organisation on the part of the employers?—Yes.

6109. Might not that be the ground of the failure of joint action?—Possibly. It was not in the case of the sliding-scale; we were all agreed upon the sliding-scale.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. GEORGE WATSON MACALPINE called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

6110. You are the sole proprietor of the Altham Colliery, which is situate at Altham near Accrington in the North Lancashire district?—Yes.

6111. Has that colliery been working for the last 20 years?—Yes.

6112. And is its output 2,500 tons a week or 100,000 tons a year?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6113. Do you employ about 530 hands?—Yes.

6114. Are you a member of the South Lancashire and Cheshire Coal Association?—I am.

6115. Have you been appointed to give evidence on behalf of the North Lancashire District of that Association?—I have.

6116. I believe the North Lancashire branch

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

of the Association has sent answers to the Commission's printed questions?—Some of the separate firms have.

6117. Are not those answers the official answers of the North Lancashire branch?—They are the official answers of the Association gathered from the North Lancashire collieries.

6118. And you are desirous of supplementing those written answers by some oral evidence?—Yes.

6119. In your official answers you state that the number of persons employed for the year 1890 at the collieries of North Lancashire was 76,479?—That reply refers to the whole Association.

6120. Are you able to state what number of persons are employed at the collieries of North Lancashire?—Probably from 7,000 to 9,000. I have not been able to get at the exact figures, because they are mixed up in the Inspector's report with the Manchester district.

6121. To the best of your judgment, about 7,000 to 9,000 persons?—Yes.

6122. I need not, I think, take you through the various answers that have been officially given, and which are before us; but perhaps you will answer in the terms officially adopted in those replies this question. Does your Association deal directly or indirectly with matters of difference between associated employers and their workmen?—The Association does not deal with wages questions or with matters of difference arising between employers and employed. These questions are dealt with in the different districts into which the Association is divided.

6123. The term "Association" there used has reference to the South Lancashire and Cheshire Coal Association?—It has.

6124. But does your North Lancashire Association deal with wages questions?—We have no Association in North Lancashire,

6125. You have no separate association of the employers of North Lancashire?—No.

6126. Are your wages governed by a sliding-scale?—No, they are not.

6127. How are they regulated from time to time?—By arrangement between the employers and their workpeople.

6128. The employers acting unitedly—acting together?—The district is so comparatively small that generally speaking we follow the larger districts; that has been the case for the last three years, whilst the principal advances have been taking place.

6129. That is to say, would you follow West Lancashire?—We would follow West Lancashire.

6130. Leaving them to wrangle the question out?—Not necessarily; we might individually co-operate with the West Lancashire employers.

6131. You heard the evidence given by Mr. Caldwell, did you?—I did.

6132. Mr. Caldwell, I think, told us that the West Lancashire owners would, under conditions which called for any labour claim from either side, meet the West Lancashire representatives of the Union?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6133. And discuss the wages question?—Yes.

6134. And you would in fact ultimately be guided by what might prove to be the result of their negotiations or contentions?—At the same time negotiations would be going on between the officials of the Federation and the individual employers in the district.

6135. That is, you would exercise your influence indirectly?—Yes.

6136. What are your standard hours of labour?—Might I just say that the answers under the head of North Lancashire in the official replies refer to two different sets of collieries. We have in the Burnley district some large collieries working the Arley Mine, which is 4 feet thick, and generally in the Accrington district, and Rossendale and Blackburn, we have the Mountain Mine, which varies from 20 inches to 30 inches. The official answers are taken from both sets of replies, so that where they are discrepant they may in the one case refer to to the Burnley collieries, and in the other case to the Accrington and district collieries.

6137. But you have distinguished to which they do apply?—Yes; for instance, in the reply under "Hours of labour," we say, "(*a.*) Nominally "ten at the Burnley collieries, but colliers do "not average eight hours of four days a week. "At other collieries the following are the hours" —shall I read the tables?

6138. Yes; perhaps with more special reference to the miners?—"The miners' work commences "5.55 to 6.30 a.m, and it terminates from "2.30 to 3.30 p.m. The average hours per "day are eight and three quarters, and the "interval for meals is 50 minutes."

6139. Is that 50 minutes included in the eight and three quarters hours?—Yes, 25 minutes each for two meals.

6140. What exactly is meant by "colliers do "not average eight hours of four days a "week"?—That is a reply from the Burnley district, and I think it refers to the abstentions from work.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

6141. Surely it ought to be four days of eight hours each?—I think it is intended to be eight hours for four days a week.

Mr. *Dale.*

6142. Of course that might mean that there was no more than four days a week offered, but we must take it for what it is worth?—It does not come within my personal observation or knowledge, but I think it refers more particularly to the abstentions, for I know the Burnley collieries do work more than four days a week. I think it refers more to the fact that the collieries are working, but that the men, on account of their abstentions, do not on the average put in more time; but on this I am not speaking from my own knowledge.

6143. You have heard the the evidence given by Mr. Caldwell in regard to the system prevailing in his the West Lancashire colliery

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Mr. *Dale*—continued.

district of making it a condition of employment that the men should be members of the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund?—Yes.

6144. Does that apply to your district also?—It does not apply to our district. If you look at the official answer from Burnley you will see that there they have a relief society of their own.

6145. On what page is that?—It is on the fourth page, under "Conditions of labour."

6146. Are you referring to the question, "Compensation for accidents," where the answer is, "10*s.* a week whilst unable to work; boys, "5*s.* a week. Pensions to widow and children "in cases of fatal accident, 5*s.* a week to widow "during widowhood, and 2*s.* 6*d.* a week for "each child under 13"?—Yes.

6147. Is that amount derived from a Permanent Relief Society?—The men make their contributions, and the masters supplement them by 25 per cent. The men are contracted out of the Act in Burnley.

6148. I do not quite follow; different systems prevail, do they not, in different collieries in the North Lancashire district?—That is so.

6149. At some of those collieries the system is that described by Mr. Caldwell?—Only at one, I think.

6150. Only at one?—Yes.

6151. And at the others?—At the others there is a relief society in connexion with the colliery itself. In all cases the masters contribute something towards it. In some cases the masters contribute 25 per cent., and the men are contracted out of the Act; in other cases they are not.

6152. There is no uniform system making it obligatory as a condition of service that the men should join the relief fund and contract out of the Act?—There is no uniform system at all.

6153. What in your own collieries is the system?—At my own collieries the men used to be members of the Permanent Relief Society, and were contracted out of the Act as in West Lancashire. We had a strike in 1885, and the miners submitted that, as one means towards a settlement, they should not be requested to be members, of the Permanent Relief Society. The conditions of employment exempted the miners, but enforced the membership on the rest of the workmen, both underground and above. About two years ago I intimated to the workpeople that membership of that society would be optional, and recently I withdrew altogether the condition that the men should be contracted out of the Act, so that now some of the workpeople are members of the relief society and others are not.

6154. Are those who are members of the relief society members on the basis of contracting out of the Act?—Not now.

6155. Not now?—No.

6156. Then in that case you contribute 15 per cent., I take it?—No, we have made no alteration in the contributions.

6157. Do you contribute 25 per cent.?—Yes, but it only applies to a limited portion of the workpeople.

6158. Have you had any strikes or lock-outs in your district lately?—At my own colliery we had a strike in 1885.

6159. For what reason, and what was its duration?—It lasted for 32 weeks; the strike was against notice of reduction of wages by 10 per cent.

6160. In 1885?—Yes, in 1885.

6161. And what was the result?—The result was a reduction by 7 per cent. after arbitration.

6162. And as the result of an award?—As the result of an award.

6163. Did that arise from some local characteristics of your colliery?—At some of the collieries in the neighbourhood reductions had already taken place, but we were a little later in requesting the reduction, and we consequently had a strike.

6164. In that case you were not following West Lancashire?—At that time there was no general action in the matter. I might show you this diagram, which shows the condition of things which led to the strike (*producing a diagram and explaining the same*). In 1876 there was the last reduction. *This* line shows the wages paid at the Altham collieries. There was no reduction of wages excepting a slight variation in the methods by which the men were paid until 1885, when this reduction was asked for. In the meantime the rate of wages that was earned by the men rose considerably; *that* is the rate of wage per day. *This* line shows you the average selling prices at the colliery, and you see they had declined by *this* per-centage. *This* shows the line of wages at perhaps the largest colliery in the district. They had gone down *here* about 10 per cent., or perhaps a little under. Then they had gone right down to 16 per cent.; then they had risen again, and just before our strike came on there was again a reduction of wages, which brought the proportion of wages near to the proportion of prices, but when we asked for the 10 per cent. reduction they struck.

6165. When did the proposal to refer the dispute to arbitration arise—at what stage, I mean to say, of the 32 weeks?—The proposal was my own, and was made at the very beginning.

6166. You offered arbitration at the outset?—I offered arbitration at once, at the outset.

6167. But that was declined?—It was declined.

6168. But ultimately accepted after the strike had existed for some long period?—It was.

6169. Has there been any other strike of importance in the district since then?—None, with the exception of the three or four days strike which was common to the whole of the Midlands, and Lancashire, and Yorkshire in March 1890.

6170. Have disputes been during a recent period more frequent than formerly, or less so?—It is very difficult to tell; I think perhaps

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

within the last few years petty disputes have been less frequent in the district.

6171. Had you, at your colliery at any rate, a sliding-scale in operation after the strike of 1885?—We had.

6172. And how long did it last?—It lasted till September the 30th, 1888.

6173. And how was it terminated: by whom was it terminated?—It was terminated by notice from the men.

6174. Do you know the reason for their abandoning that system?—The miners in Lancashire and Yorkshire were just on the eve of requesting the first of the large advances, the 10 per cent. advance which was conceded in the beginning of November 1888.

6175. The sliding-scale to which you referred was special to your colliery, was it not?—It was.

6176. And might therefore in a changing market have created a difference between your wages and those of other collieries?—It undoubtedly would.

6177. What are the views of your Association on the question of limiting the hours of underground men to eight?—They are not very favourable.

6178. What influence do you think it would have upon your trade?—The principal difficulty is the limitation of the hours of winding coal.

6179. To limit the hours of hewers to eight from bank to bank would in your opinion shorten considerably the hours of coal drawing?—That is so.

6180. Yours is of course a single-shift system of working?—Yes

6181. What are the views of your district in regard to arbitration, or any similar mode of meeting labour difficulties?—I am not quite sure that I can give the views of the district, because they are so very various. Shall I read the official answer?

6182. If you please?—In reply to Question 6, Part IV.: "Can you suggest any means of "avoiding or arranging strikes and promoting "cordial relations between capital and labour?" we say, "No, except the cultivation of friendly "relations with the Union leaders, who, however, are not able always to control their constituents. We have no faith in our district in "arbitrations, or the interference of third "parties." That reply comes from the Burnley district; but in regard to the first part especially it expresses my own views.

6183. Do you mean by the "first part," the sentence beginning "No, except," &c.?—Yes; the reply goes on, "A board of conciliation "between employers and employed would be "able probably to settle the majority of "questions." The words that come in afterwards, "in favour of a sliding-scale," I think have been imported from West Lancashire; it is a mistake in the scheduling of the answers.

6184. You are desirous of reading the official answer from North Lancashire as omitting the words "in favour of a sliding-scale"?—I think I would prefer to do so.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6185. May I take it that the owners in your district are not in favour of a sliding-scale?—We do not feel that a sliding-scale would permanently settle any question; for example, in the case of our own colliery, the moment it became the interest of the workmen to give notice of the termination of the scale, they did so, and I have no doubt the employers would have done the same thing if it had been the other way, too.

6186. Might it not be possible that a dissatisfaction with the sliding-scale, which applies merely to one colliery might not show itself if it was a sliding-scale applying to a very large area?—The sliding-scale of course is an admirable means of settling matters for a few years; but the question which is behind that is, can there be any permanent basis to a sliding-scale. Either the standard wage alters, as in the case of the Durham scales, or the relation of the standard wage to the price basis alters; so that we do not see there a permanent settlement of any question.

6187. Do you mean simply that at reasonable intervals—two, three, or more years—there would have to be a re-consideration by reason possibly of labour having established a somewhat different standard of claim?—Yes, that is my meaning.

6188. But would you see any objection to a sliding-scale adopted for, say, two or three years, and then subject to re-consideration?—Well, I should personally look on such a scale with favour, but it is always to be observed that it is only a settlement for two or three years.

6189. But still it is a system which might be prolonged over an indefinite number of years upon the parties reviewing and re-considering at intervals of two or three years the standards established by the scale?—Yes, it avoids certain disputes during the period; but it does not avoid the great crises in the labour market.

6190. Is there any other point on which you desire to supplement the written answers of your Association?—I should like to call your attention to the last answer.

6191. That is the reply to our question, "Have you any other statement or suggestion "to make for the information of the Commission"?—Yes.

6192. Will you kindly read the official answer?—"It is unreasonable that whilst boys "may work in factories at 11, they may "not work on the surface at mines until 12. "The work at collieries is healthier than in "factories, and the same regulation as to age "should apply to both industries." We are in the very heart of a manufacturing district, and we feel keenly the competition for labour with the factories. The effect of the Mines Regulation Act as it stands at present is that the factories get the boys at 11 and we do not get them at 12, that is to say, when they get into the factories they remain in the factories.

6193. The ability of a boy to take work at

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

a factory at 11 determines the occupation that he is to follow for life?—That is so.

6194. And you think it deprives the industry in which you are interested of a certain natural feeder of boys?—Yes, we do not compete in the labour market on equal terms.

Sir *John Gorst.*

6195. But they get them at 10 years; 11 is not the age yet; 10 is the age?—It will be 11 years on the 1st of next year.

Mr. *Mundella.*

6196. It is 10 to-day?—I think that it is to be 11 from the 1st of next year.

6197. It is 10 to-day?—Well, we put our case in the mildest possible form.

6198. Then do you want the factory age raised to 12; is that it?—Well, we merely state the inequality of the case.

6199. But is that what you desire?—We say that we should be on equal terms.

6200. You do not want to reduce your age?—We do not want to go back on legislation, although I do not think the Legislature ever intended us to be deprived of boys on the surface—on the surface, mark you—at 10.

Mr. *Dale.*

6201. I think you simply wish to direct attention to the inequality and its influence?—Yes.

6202. You are not so much concerned as to whether both should be 11 or both should be 12?—That is so.

6203. But that it should be the same?—That is so.

6204. Is there any other point that you wish to bring before us?—I think I should like to call your attention to the second page, dealing with wages, hours, and conditions of labour. The schedule which you find there refers to the Altham Collieries, and you will see that the average wage earned per day by the miner is 7*s.* 10*d.* It goes up to as much as 11*s.* 9¼*d.*

6205. Is that 7*s.* 10*d.* an average drawn over a considerable period?—The average was taken for three months.

6206. Three recent months?—Three recent months; but you will find in the next column an average taken over 50 weeks; that is, the total wage earned by the men during the whole year is taken and divided by 50, two weeks being left out for the holidays, Christmas holidays, Whitsuntide holidays, and the local holidays.

6207. During this 50 weeks did the same standard of wages prevail as for the period over which the 7*s.* 10*d.* was taken?—Exactly.

6208. And therefore to divide the 37*s.* 3*d.* by 7*s.* 10*d.* would give the average number of days worked?—It would.

6209. Is there any other point on which you wish to offer evidence?—I think there is no other point which I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to, except with regard perhaps to the hours of labour on page 3. Referring again specially to the miners, you notice that

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

the average hours during the day are eight and three-quarters, and that gives in hours per week only 46 nett hours worked by the men.

6210. That is not worked out, I think, is it?—You have it there. There is an interval of 50 minutes for meals, and the working ceases at 1 p.m. on Saturdays, and that gives 46 hours for the nett working week. I just wanted to draw your attention to the fact that an eight and three-quarters day in our district gives a nett working week of 46 hours only.

6211. Then in getting at the eight and three-quarters you have not taken in Saturday?—No; eight and three-quarters is for the other days.

6212. You mean it is for Monday to Friday inclusive?—Yes. You will find that if you take the average of the other figures in the first two columns, it will work out to eight and three-quarters,—the first two on the list.

6213. Then you say eight and three-quarters would not be the average over six days of the week?—No.

6214. But if you were to divide by six instead of by five you would get the average number of hours per day; that is, if you brought Saturday in?—Yes, and if you deduct the meal-hours.

6215. I want to be quite clear what you mean when you speak of 46 hours; do you mean to say this, that deducting the meal-times from the eight and three quarter hours over five days in the week, taking an account of the actual number of hours, exclusive of meal-times and Saturdays, it would come to 46?—Yes, and practically that will be the number of hours that we can wind coal in a week, where for five days the men are working eight and three-quarter hours.

6216. And are working on Saturday also, but for a short time?—Yes.

6217. Going back for a moment to your answer to the Commission's question No. 6, on page 7, the last but one, you say you have no faith in the district in arbitrations or interference of third parties. You omit the word implying approval of the sliding scale, and you say, "No, except the cultivation of friendly relations with Union leaders." Now of course that would in itself not be a mode of settlement, though it might be the establishing of such relations as might facilitate settlement; but do you see nothing better for it than just to wrangle out each difference as it arises?—The last paragraph is practically my own reply; but I say that the relations with the Union leaders in our district are very friendly, and as a matter of fact on matters of detail we have very little difficulty in settling any matters at all.

6218. But not to settle general wages questions?—As I have said, we are not a large enough district to make any settlements practically by ourselves.

6219. Was the board of conciliation to which allusion is made in the third paragraph of your answer to Question No. 6 designed rather to have reference to local disputes?—Yes. If we had had a board of conciliation in 1885 I do not think our own dispute would have lasted for 32 weeks.

Mr. *Dale—continued.*

6220. Is there any other point on which you wish to volunteer evidence?—I think not.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

6221. I notice in the schedule of wages at the Altham Colliery it is stated that the average daily wage of the drawers is 2*s.*; are the drawers boys?—Mainly boys; mainly under 16.

6222. Do you employ a considerable number of boys in your district?—We do; a considerable proportion. We have 162 drawers underground, who would be mostly boys under 16; and we have 19 boys on the surface. That is about 180 boys out of 530.

6223. What are the hours of the underground boys?—The younger boys are regulated by the Mines Regulation Act.

6224. Do they work to the full maximum allowed under the Mines Regulation Act?—Yes, of course the maximum never exceeding the eight and three-quarters which is worked by the colliers.

6225. What would be the effect on the output of a reduction of the hours of work to eight hours a day?—In our district I think it would undoubtedly reduce the output.

6226. Can you form any estimate of what the reduction would be, what per centage of the present output?—Eight and three-quarters is the number of hours worked, and probably if we reduce the output in the same proportion from eight and three-quarters to eight we should get at the alteration of the output; it would be in proportion to the reduction of hours.

6227. You think it would be pretty nearly in the same proportion as the reduction in time?—From bank to bank.

6228. And as to cost of production, what would be the effect?—It would increase the cost of production.

6229. Materially?—Somewhat.

6230. So materially as to close a certain number of collieries in times of depression?—I think perhaps not. Collieries are not so easily closed in our district.

6231. Does that mean that at present you are earning a sufficient margin of profit to enable you to stand the loss which an alteration of that kind would cause?—That is rather a difficult question to answer. The margin of profit is not sufficient.

6232. I am not speaking, of course, of any particular colliery, but of the collieries generally in your district?—It would reduce the margin of profit to a very trifling thing at most collieries.

6233. Have the men ever asked you to reduce the hours of work to eight?—Not specifically, not definitely at our colliery. We know that they are in favour of eight hours provided it is generally conceded.

6234. Their attitude is merely that they are willing to go with the majority of miners in the country, but that they have no very special grievance of their own in the number of hours now worked?—That is not exactly what I meant to indicate. What I mean to indicate is that they would willingly have the eight hours, but they would not have the eight hours, as far as I understand their views, while other collieries in the country are working nine.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

6235. You state on the last page that in your district you have no faith in arbitration or the interference of third parties; may I ask what your own personal view of that matter is. You have had some experience of arbitration!—As far as we have had experience of arbitration we have had no reason to find fault with it. I think in our own arbitration there was perfect fairness on both sides. The case was not referred to an umpire and consequently to some extent it was a compromise. We got 7 per cent. instead of 10.

6236. How do you mean the case was not referred to an umpire; was not an umpire chosen?—Two arbitrators were chosen with power to select an umpire.

6237. And the men in that case loyally accepted the award?—They did.

6238. Which was for a reduction of 7 per cent.?—Yes.

6239. You offered arbitration at the beginning of the dispute?—We did.

6240. And it was not until the dispute had continued for 32 weeks, or at all events for a considerable period, that the men were willing to accept it?—That was so.

6241. Then I may take it this statement "we have no faith in our district in arbitration "or to interference of third parties," does not represent by any means the unanimous view of the district?—Most of the colliery proprietors, I think, in the neighbourhood do not care for arbitration; and the men, if I may venture to say so, as far as I know their views, do not care for arbitration.

6242. You spoke of a sliding-scale. You said that one of the greatest disadvantages attending a sliding-scale was that it would not settle matters for more than a limited period; say two years?—Yes.

6243. Do not you think it would be a great gain that questions affecting wages should be settled even for two years?—I think so; but I merely draw the attention of the Commission to the fact that it is not a means of avoiding the great labour crises.

6244. That only amounts to this, that all sliding-scales would need revision at certain periods longer or shorter?—Yes, and then comes the crucial point.

Mr. *Burt.*

6245. Have you ever had a joint committee!—No.

6246. Have you had anything of that nature in North Lancashire?—Nothing of the sort.

6247. Have you ever attempted to form one!—No, we have not.

6248. Have the miners ever applied to you through their Trade Unions to agree to the formation of a joint committee?—They have not.

6249. When you say that you have no faith in arbitration and in interference of third parties, does that mean that if you came to a dead-lock

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

and could not adjust your difference you would accept a strike or a lock-out in preference to the appointment of an umpire?—I explained to the Commission, I think when you were not present, that I am not responsible for the whole of the answers in the schedule. Personally, before I would have a strike I would refer the matter to arbitration.

6250. With regard to the difference of ages of boys at factories and at the mines, is it not a fact that in the factories the age of protection is 18?—I do not understand the question.

6251. The age up to which the hours are regulated by law in factories is 18, is it not?—That I cannot say. I am not sufficiently conversant with the Factory Acts.

6252. Assuming that it is 18, which I believe it is, would you be be willing to raise the age at the mines, so as to make the age at the mines the same as at the factories?—I think we have quite enough interference on the part of the Legislature at present. We would not willingly increase the age of interference.

6253. Then does that mean that you only want equality when the equality would be to the advantage of the coal-owners?—That is putting it in another way. The question between the ages of 16 and 18, when supervision stops, is not by any means as crucial a question as the age at which we may begin to employ labour. They are on a different footing altogether.

6254. I gather, however, from your answer to Mr. Balfour that you do not really want to lower the age so much as to establish equality?—We do not want to go back on legislation.

6255. Would you not recognise some difference between surface employment and underground employment, involving absence of daylight, and special dangers to which the underground workmen are exposed, as establishing some claim to a difference between the one and the other?—We cannot employ boys on the surface at 11 years of age.

6256. That is another question; am I then to understand that your evidence had reference to the surface rather than to underground?—Yes. At the same time I may venture to give my opinion that the employment in the mines themselves is quite as healthy as in the factories.

6257. With regard to the hours in North Lancashire, they are given here as eight and three-quarters per day; that is an average, I presume?—It is worked out for my own colliery, but it will apply generally to the whole district.

6258. Does that mean actual work at the face; is it the coal hewers to which those figures apply?—It refers to all underground workmen, and is from bank to bank.

Sir *John Gorst.*

6259. I understood the witness to say the boys were working the full time allowed by the Act, which is 54 hours per week?—I said that the employment of the boys was regulated by the Act, but that in no case did it exceed the figures in the schedule.

Sir *John Gorst*—continued.

6260. I understood you to say it was regulated by the Act, and that the boys were working up to the full time allowed by the Act?—Of course we are speaking now of averages altogether.

Mr. *Burt.*

6261. With regard to this 50 minutes for meal-times, do the pits stop drawing coal during the 50 minutes—Yes.

6262. Would the 50 minutes be allowed to, or taken by, the coal getters, as well as other classes of workmen?—Yes.

6263. As a matter of fact, they do take the 50 minutes?—I think I may say that they do. They are in their own separate places, and they are their own masters, of course. We do not control them.

6264. Would the men be allowed to come out of the pit at 2 o'clock, as was stated by Mr. Caldwell?—Half-past 2 in our district.

6265. Then at any time after half past 2 they will be allowed to come out of the pit?—You notice they are not in till 6.30, and that we do not commence winding till a few minutes before 7, perhaps a quarter to 7.

6266. Then that will be eight hours; from 6.30 to 2.30, and I understand they can come out then?—Yes; but of course you cannot lift all the men in one cage at 2.30.

6267. What I want to point you to is that so far as the coal-owners are concerned, they do not interfere with the men coming out at half-past 2 o'clock?—No, but of course the men who have gone in first—who have gone in at five minutes to 6—have been in longer than eight hours.

6268. I am not wanting to draw from you the admission that eight hours from bank to bank would be conceded; but so far as the coal-owners themselves are concerned they would not interfere with the coal-getters, who might have practically eight hours in North Lancashire?—I think I should be answering that question if I said that a man who went down at 6.30 might, if he chose to come to the first cage, be lifted at 2.30.

6269. I think I understood you to say, in answer to Mr. Balfour, that no organised or united application had been made by the workmen in North Lancashire for eight hours?—That is so. I think I am right in stating that I have no recollection of having been applied to on the eight hours question.

Mr. *Abraham.*

6270. Were you in any way represented at the conference of employers which was held here in London some time last year with respect to reducing the hours?—I do not remember; it does not come within my recollection.

Mr. *Dale.*

6271. You said that there was no distinct association of employers in North Lancashire?—Not in North Lancashire; but I thought that the question of Mr. Abraham applied to the South Lancashire and Cheshire Association.

Mr. *Abraham.*

6272. Was there any association that you were connected with represented at that conference held in London between the employers and workmen on the hours' question?—The Association did not take any part in that conference as an Association. There were several coal-owners from Lancashire came up, but none from the district which I represent.

6273. With respect to fines, I find that in your answer you said fines are very infrequent, but that sometimes in cases of breach of rules, the men have the option of paying a fine or going before a magistrate?—Yes, that is so.

6274. What rules have you in view when you say that?—I do not remember any cases but one, where a man was working with gas in his place, an accumulation having taken place while he was in the place, and we told him he might either pay a fine or go before the magistrates.

6275. The rules you refer to then would be rules under the Mines Regulation Acts?—Yes, probably.

6276. Do you consider that that Act is carried out for fining a man for breach?—The Act is carried out with the utmost strictness. I think you will find that we have the power to do that.

6277. Will you kindly inform the Commission under what section of the Mines Act you have the power to inflict upon a man a fine?—Perhaps I may say, in answer to that, that it has been done as a matter of fact in one or two cases as a matter of arrangement.

6278. Will you kindly point out to the Commission under what section of the Mines Act you have power to do that?—There is no such power.

6279. Are you aware, then, that you are committing a breach of the Act?—I have not taken any legal advice on the point, and I have not the Mines Act at my fingers ends at the moment.

6280. I understand you are either a colliery manager, or a colliery agent, or a colliery owner?—I am a colliery owner.

6281. And as such responsible under the Act?—That is so.

6282. You do not know the Act?—I am acquainted with its general provisions.

6283. And you commit this breach of it?—I have a manager who knows it thoroughly.

6284. Although infrequent these breaches have occurred?—Yes.

6285. Again, with regard to the conditions of labour, and safety of employment, inspection, working places, &c., you answer that the general and special rules established under the Coal Mines Regulation Act are strictly complied with. That is at page 4. Will you kindly explain to us now what are the means taken to enforce this rule. Take the 39th general rule for instance; what are the means taken to enforce that rule which provides that "no person is to be employed" &c.?—To begin with, of course the boys are about the working face from the moment they enter the mine.

Mr. *Dale.*

6286. I think the question is a more limited one. On page 4 your last answer but one is, "This rule provides that no person is to be "employed as a coal-getter in the face of the "workings until he has had two years' experience "of such work under the supervision of skilled "workmen." Now Mr. Abraham asks what steps are taken to enforce that rule?—Generally speaking, a learner will be put in the same pillar with a getter, possibly a relation of his own.

Mr. *Abraham.*

6287. But in the same answer referred to by Mr. Dale you have said that you have no apprentices?—They are not indentured.

6288. What is the mode of ascertaining whether a stranger coming to the colliery is a competent man?—The miners in our district, generally speaking, are men who are well known. We have little or no importation of foreign labour into this district.

6289. You may have a tramp here or there coming?—A collier coming from the Welsh mines would not find himself very happy in 20 inches or 2 feet.

Mr. *Dale.*

6290. I think Mr. Abraham wants to know whether, when a stranger seeks employment, any questions are put to him tending to elicit whether he is an experienced person under this rule?—A stranger would probably be put to work with another workman.

Mr. *Abraham.*

6291. I will pass on, if there is a manager to come; very likely he knows?—Of course I need hardly say that, as at the Chairman's collieries, the collieries are under the management of competent officials, and they see to the carrying out of the Mines Act.

6292. Are your men engaged under similar conditions of employment as is generally the case in Lancashire?—The conditions are various I think there is only one colliery in the district under similar conditions to the West Lancashire collieries.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

6293. Are there very thin seams in part of North Lancashire?—Yes.

6294. Do you find that the present hours of labour are detrimental to the health of the men?—We do not.

6295. Would you then think it right to debar them from working the hours of labour they now do work?—We would not think it right at all, speaking as a matter of principle, to regulate the hours of adult male labour.

6296. You said I think, you consider the output would be reduced if the hours were also reduced to eight?—Yes.

6297. That being so would the men earn the same wages?—I think not.

7298. I am speaking now of hewers?—I think not.

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

6299. If that were the case, do you think the men would be in favour of being limited to eight hours?—If you are speaking of their present views I suspect they are. Whether they might change them when they get the eight hours is another question.

6300. Do you think that the men imagine their wages would be reduced by the hours being reduced?—I do not know.

6301. With regard to the question of fines are the special rules established for promoting the discipline in the mines?—They are.

6302. Have you in your mind the 51st section of the Act and the 3rd sub-section. If you will allow me I will read it to you. It says, "If any "person who is bound to observe the special "rules established for any mine acts in contra- "vention of or fails to comply with any of them, "he shall be guilty of an offence against this "Act, and also the owner, agent, and manager "of such mine shall each be guilty of an offence "against this Act, unless he proves that he had "taken all reasonable means by publishing, and "to the best of his power enforcing, the rules as "regulations for the working of the mine, so as "to prevent such contravention or non-com- "pliance." Are the fines which are imposed intended to carry out that section?—I should say so; but they are so infrequent that they are really of no consequence. I never remember more than one case as a matter of fact.

6303. True; but I suppose if there were one it ought to be explained. Whether it is in connexion with the Act or whether it is not?—Perhaps so.

Mr. *Abraham.*

6304. Do you know of any Act of Parliament under which you have power to deduct a portion of a man's wages for a fine?—There is no compulsion even in that case.

6305. Do you know of any Act that you have power to do it under; are you not requested by the Act to prosecute these men?—I do not know that I can settle legal questions.

Mr. *Mundella.*

3306. You have had serious strikes in your district, have you not?—Within the last ten years, as far as the inquiry goes only one, and that was the strike to which I referred.

3307. The 32 weeks strike?—That is the only strike.

3308. That was in 1885?—Yes.

3309. Does your experience go as far back as 1868?—No.

3310. What towns does your district cover?—It goes up the valley from Burnley towards Todmorden; then you come to Accrington, and it spreads towards Blackburn and Darwen and into Rossendale; that is what we call North Lancashire.

6311. The Wigan district is not affected then by the strikes in your own district?—That is so.

6312. For instance, in 1885, when your men were on strike for 32 weeks, there was no strike in the Wigan district?—No.

Mr. *Mundella*—continued.

6313. It only extended to your district—North Lancashire?—Only to this particular colliery.

6314. Only to your colliery?—Yes.

6315. Then it was not throughout North Lancashire?—No.

6316. Only to your own colliery?—That is so.

6317. Your collieries were all standing were they not, in 1868, when there were strikes in the Wigan district, and when the pit-holes were in possession practically of the military?—I cannot go back to 1868; but in 1881 when there was a large strike in the Wigan district we were not affected at all.

6318. Then there is no kind of solidarity between your district and the Wigan and Manchester district, although you represent North Lancashire, and these answers come from three districts?—I can only speak from personal knowledge of the North Lancashire district.

6319. You have said, so far as you are concerned, and those employers whom you represent, you have no faith in arbitration, or the interference of third parties?—I have already explained that, I am scarcely responsible for that answer.

6320. Can you tell us how far you share that opinion yourself?—I can only say that in our own case my experience of arbitration was not an unhappy one—that it was favourable.

6321. Was it confined to your own case or to the district?—It was confined to my own case.

6322. Did you make an offer of reduction then?—Yes.

6323. And you coupled it with a readiness to refer it to arbitration?—That was so.

6324. And it was referred to the arbitration of one employer and one workman, with the power to call in an umpire in case of disagreement?—Yes, a mining engineer and one of the Federation officials.

6325. An official representing the workmen?—Yes.

6326. And they had power to call in an umpire in case of disagreement?—Yes.

6327. They did not disagree?—No.

6328. They gave a joint award of a less reduction than the one you offered?—Quite so.

6329. And the men accepted it loyally?—That is so.

6330. You say that the last paragraph of the answer to qustion No. 6 is practically your own view of the question?—That is so.

6331. You think that a board of conciliation between employers and employed would be able probably to settle a majority of the questions?—I think that frequently, especially in the smaller collieries, a board of conciliation would be most useful.

6332. And why not in the larger ones?—Possibly in the larger too. But these petty disputes are apt to be at smaller collieries.

6333. Are you aware that in some of the very worst strikes in the Lancashire coal district—I cannot say how far they extended into your district—the workmen have prayed for arbitra-

Mr. *Mundella*—continued.

tion and conciliation again and again?—I have not experience of any district, but my own, and that experience does not go back beyond 1878.

6334. Were you in the district when William Pickard was the representative of the miners?—Yes.

6335. Was your district under his supervision?—I think Mr. William Pickard was the man who brought our dispute to arbitration.

6336. Mr. William Pickard, for many years, while he was representative of the Miners' Union in Lancashire, strongly urged on the employers the adoption of conciliation and arbitration, did he not?—That I cannot say. He advocated it certainly in our case. I have here, and I will hand to you, a record of negotiations in West Lancashire for a sliding-scale and board of conciliation.

6337. If this last paragraph expresses your own opinion, can you say how far it expresses the opinion of those whom you represent?—The opinion of the mine-owners in the district is various.

6338. But you have an association, have you not?—No, not in the district.

6339. You have not a mine-owners' association?—Not in the district; not to deal with labour questions.

Mr. *Dale.*

6340. We had it from the previous witness this morning that what is called the South Lancashire and Cheshire Coal-owners Association covers the North Lancashire and West Lancashire and Manchester and I think Ashton-under-Lyne districts; is that the case?—Yes.

6341 But that that large Association covering these districts does not deal with wages questions, but leaves each of the districts of which it is composed to deal with their own wages questions; and you say that, in regard to your district of North Lancashire, there is not any actual coal-owners' association?—That is so.

Mr. *Mundella.*

6342. Then while the West Lancashire and the Manchester and the Cheshire Associations deal with questions of labour, your North Lancashire Association does not deal with them?—No.

Mr. *Dale.*

6343. You said, I think, that your district was so small that it followed the more important districts in the matter of wages, and left them to wrangle them out?—I did not quite say that.

6344. You said that the West Lancashire Owners' Association, or their representatives, would meet the Miners' Association of that district, and discuss the wages questions, did you not?—What I said was that generally speaking we would follow West Lancashire.

Mr. *Mundella.*

6345. Then practically you are dominated by the larger district?—That is so.

Mr. *Mundella*—continued.

6346. You follow the example of the larger district?—That is so.

6347. Then if the larger district is willing to adopt a board of conciliation, you believe that yours would follow suit?—I think it is very likely that we would.

6348. And you think that the intelligent employers in your district are in favour of a board of conciliation?—There are some of the intelligent employers who are not.

6349. They prefer having a separate bargain with their men, irrespective of the surrounding neighbourhood?—They prefer to deal directly with the officials of the Union.

6350. At the risk of these frequent strikes?—The opinion to which I am now referring as that of a very large employer in the neighbourhood, is that any minor questions, apart from any great crisis in the coal trade, can be settled between him and the miners' representative without any interference by a board of conciliation or anybody else.

6351. But your own experience was that you had a strike of 32 weeks for the lack of a board of conciliation?—I have already said that I believe a board of conciliation would have settled that strike sooner.

Mr. *Courtney.*

6352. Is there anything to prevent a special rule in the mine having within its own borders its own penalty?—There are special rules which are published for the district. Our inspector's district has its own special rules. Any colliery may have its special rules, but as a matter of fact in the various inspectors' districts they have, generally speaking, the same set of rules.

6353. But within your own colliery you have not special rules of your own?—No.

6354. You have a power to have special rules of your own?—Subject to approval by the Secretary of State.

6355. Is there anything to prevent a special rule, if you adopted it, having within itself, if the Secretary of State approved, its own penalty?—I have not thought out the bearing of the Mines Act on the special rules.

6356. You are aware that a general provision with respect to penalties says, "unless there is "a special penalty provided"?—Yes, that is so.

6357. With respect to the hours of labour, your hours are eight and three quarters?—That is so; the average hours from bank to bank.

6358. If they were reduced to eight from bank to bank, the hours of labour at the face would be reduced by more in proportion?—That is so, because the travelling to and fro would be a constant quantity practically.

6359. And you are inclined to think that would greatly raise the cost of production?—It would, to some extent, undoubtedly.

6360. You have not attempted to make any estimate of that at all?—It is quite impossible to estimate what the effect of the changed conditions of labour would be.

Mr. *Courtney*—continued.

6361. The actual amount paid to the person working at the face for getting the coal would not be made greater necessarily; his earnings would depend upon the coal he got?—That is so.

6362. And therefore the cost in that respect would not be increased?—No; there are the permanent costs of the colliery, however.

6363. And those would be applicable to seven and a half hours instead of eight hours, or something of that kind?—That is so.

6364. Are your men very punctual?—Speaking for my own colliery, we have no reason to complain. We have not more than 5 per cent. of abstentions, that is quite under the average of the district.

6365. It would seem from the figures given that the men do not make out five days' work a week?—No; of course the colliery is always idle for some days during the year, especially in the summer-time.

6366. That is independent of the two weeks holiday supposed to be taken?—I have taken out the average days that the colliery worked in the summer six months and in the winter six months; and in 1887 the average days worked in the winter six months was five days and a half, and in the summer six months five days and a sixth, although in the very height of summer it would be less. In 1890 the colliery worked five and a half days in the winter six months, and five days and a third in the summer six months.

6367. Then the workman has a good deal of leisure perforce?—Yes, he has a considerable amount of leisure.

6368. In your colliery you have no cause to complain of the want of punctuality in coming to work?—They are better than in most districts, and in most places.

6369. There is not much margin of improvement in that respect to compensate for the reduced hours?—In our colliery there is not.

Sir *John Gorst.*

6370. Do the coalowners, in the district for which you are speaking, ever have to pay anything under the Employers' Liability Act?—I do not know.

6371. Have you ever heard of a case?—I have not heard of a case at all.

6372. Never?—Never.

6373. You have heard of a great many accidents, have you not?—Yes, we do have accidents.

6374. People are disabled?—Yes.

6375. Killed?—Yes.

6376. Laid up for weeks?—That is so.

6377. Now my question is, did you ever hear of an employer having under the Employers' Liability Act to make good any part of that damage?—I have never heard of cases in North Lancashire. There has not been a case in North Lancashire, as a matter of fact.

6378. Have you ever known a case in which an employer has had to pay compensation for accident under the Employers' Liability Act either by litigation or by an acknowledgment on his part that he is legally liable?—The answer to that is that I do not know of such a case.

Sir *John Gorst*—continued.

6379. What you call the Permanent Relief Fund deals not only with cases of accident, but with cases of ordinary sickness as well?—No, only accidents.

6380. Not cases of ordinary sickness?—No.

6381. Then all the contributions that are paid by the workmen to the permanent relief fund are contributions going to make good the result of mining accidents?—That is so.

6382. In your average of eight and three-quarters hours a day, do you count six days a week, or are you counting in Saturdays?—Eight and three-quarter hours a day is the average of five days from Monday to Friday. We do not make eight and three-quarter hours on the Saturday.

6383. Do some of the the miners work on the Sunday?—No. No mines work on Sunday in any district.

6384. But the men are employed for making good the ventilation sometimes?—That is so.

6385. Now you said in answer to a question that you opposed any interference with the hours of adult male labour?—That is so.

6386. Are you opposed to the legislative prohibition of Sunday work?—The Mines Regulation Act insists on the ventilation of collieries being carried on continuously.

6387. That is not my question. Are you opposed to legislative restrictions of Sunday work?—I am not opposed to the restriction of Sunday work.

6388. Are you opposed to restrictions on the right of an adult male to work on Sunday?—I think adult males can be left to look after themselves.

6389. On Sunday?—On Sunday; yes, I think so.

6390. Then your answer to me is that you are opposed to any restriction of Sunday work of an adult male?—That is not a question that I have thought out.

6391. I will not press it if you have not thought it out?—I do not care to answer a question I have not thought out.

6392. You have expressed an opinion here that the reduction of the hours of labour from eight and three-quarters to eight would reduce the output; is that opinion based upon any statistics or information, or only upon general ideas?—We can have no statistics of the effect of the reduction.

6393. But have you heard of cases in which the reduction of the hours of labour has not diminished but actually increased the output?—I do not know of any cases.

6394. If the workmen at the face of the coal hewed as much coal with the reduced hours as he does now, the cost of production would not be increased, would it?—There is always the difficulty of winding; that introduces a limitation.

Sir *John Gorst*—continued.

6395. Would the increase in the cost of the product by the difficulty of winding be appreciable?—The output of the colliery would be reduced.

6396. No, the output would not be reduced if the man at the face could hew as much coal in the seven and a half hours as he does now in eight?—It does not matter how much he hews if he cannot get it drawn and wound.

6397. How many hours do you draw and wind now?—About 46.

6398. In the week?—In the week.

6399. Then you can increase the hours of drawing and winding without exceeding the eight hours day?—No; the eight and three-quarter hours from bank to bank only leaves us about 46 hours for winding.

6400. I want to ask you a question about boys. Boys are sometimes worked 54 hours a week in the collieries of which you are speaking. That is the limitation of the Act?—The average would not come up to that.

6401. I am not speaking of the average; I am asking whether there are some weeks in the year in which a boy works 54 hours under ground?—No, I think not.

6402. How long?—The figures here are eight and three-quarter hours a day.

6403. That is the average?—That is the average.

6404. But then if the average is that, sometimes he must work more than that?—Probably any one man or boy works the average number of hours.

6405. I will put my question to you in this way: What is the maximum number of hours a week which a lad practically works underground in a colliery?—In a full week $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5 + 4\frac{1}{2}$.

6406. Then if that is the average the maximum must be something more?—No.

6407. You do not mean to say that the boys are always working the average number of hours; do not they sometimes exceed it, and sometimes fall short of it?—That is so; but it can only be within very slight variations.

6408. How much does it come to according to your calculation?—To 48¼ hours.

6409. What is the age of these boys who work 48¼ hours; the minimum age is 12, is it not?—12.

6410. Do you mean to say, as a man of experience that the health of a child of 12 years of age, is not injured by working underground 48 hours a week?—Generally speaking they would not be under 13.

6411. But there are some boys of 12 who are working 48 hours a week underground?—They are mostly half-timers.

6412. Are there any boys of 12 who are working 48 hours a week underground?—There would be very few, if there are any.

6413. Are there boys of 13 working that time?—Yes.

6414. Do you, as a man of experience, think it is detrimental to the health of a child of that age to work 48 hours a week underground?—The work of the boy is always proportioned to his age.

6415. That is not an answer to my question. I ask you whether it is detrimental to their health to be underground all that time?—The probability is that the younger boys are not working up to the average number of hours.

6416. If they are underground is it detrimental to their health?—We have not found it detrimental to the health of the boys. Our boys are thoroughly sound and healthy boys—much healthier than in the factories—very much.

6417. Then do you put it that it is consistent with the growth and welfare of a child of that age to work so long as that underground?—I have already observed that the work of the boy is proportioned to his age. Probably the younger boys will on the whole have less time underground.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Tuesday, December 8th, 1891.

THIRTEENTH DAY.

Commission Room, Westminster Hall, Tuesday, 8th December 1891.

PRESENT:

Mr. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

The Right Hon. H. H. FOWLER, M.P.
Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Sir WILLIAM LEWIS.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.
Mr. E. TROW.
Mr. H. TAIT (Group B.), and the Right Hon. LEONARD COURTNEY, M.P., Mr. M. AUSTIN, and Mr. J. MAWDSLEY (Group C.), also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Secretaries.

Mr. ARTHUR SOPWITH called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

6418. You are a mining engineer by profession?—I am.

6419. And you are the vice-president of the Cannock Chase Coal Owners' Association?—I am.

6420. And you have been appointed by your association to give evidence on their behalf?—I have.

6421. That association has replied to the printed questions issued by the Commission?—Yes.

6422. It will not be necessary, therefore, for me to ask you all the questions that have been so replied to, because the statistical information can be taken from the returns made. Can you state, however, the number of employers or establishments connected with your association?—Eight at present.

6423. What is the total output?—It represents about 2½ million tons out of 3,000,000 tons of output; practically the whole of the Cannock Chase owners are in the association.

6424. The output of those who form the membership of the association for the year 1890 was what?—2,430,675 tons.

6425. And the total output of the Cannock Chase was what?—About 3,000,000.

6426. The industry carried on is, of course, all coal mining?—It is coal mining entirely.

6427. And the name of the association, Cannock Chase, indicates the district?—Yes, it is the Cannock Chase Coal Owners' Association.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6428. The number of persons employed by the members of your association is what?—Close upon 8,000.

6429. For what purposes does your association exist?—For the purpose of regulating broad questions of wages, and generally wages altogether; but more especially broad questions that affect all the collieries.

6430. Have you had your wages regulated at any time in that district by sliding scale?—Yes, for a considerable period, from 1874 to 1883.

6431. Not by one agreement during that period, but by an agreement from time to time revised?—There were really four modifications of the agreement.

6432. I suppose those agreements provided for wages being varied according to the ascertained prices of coal?—Yes, based upon the average selling price of coal.

6433. When and by whom was the last of such agreements terminated?—The last of the agreements was terminated by the men; it was the one that was made in 1882.

6434. It was terminated when?—It was terminated in 1883.

6435. By notice from the men?—Yes.

6436. Was that with a view to their desiring it to be modified in their interest, or with a view of abandoning the sliding scale principle?—It was more with a view of abandoning the sliding scale principle than anything else. There was some dissatisfaction amongst the men, but there was no specific cause. They

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

gave no reason, except that if there was a sliding scale it might be on more advantageous terms; but it was principally, you may say, that there was a question amongst the men, and at that time they thought that a sliding scale arrangement was not very satisfactory.

6437. Then for the past eight years your wages have not been regulated by a sliding scale?—No.

6438. How have they been arranged from time to time as trade has increased or diminished?—The masters and men have met together when any question arose. As a matter of fact, there has been very little variation since 1883, when the sliding scale was abolished.

6439. The printed answer of your association to one of the printed questions of the Commission, is that on the 28th of October 1884 the average wage per day of colliers, day men, labourers, and boys in this district was 4*s*. 2*d*., and 40 per cent. has since then been added to this sum?—That is so.

6440. That is a considerable variation?—That is, instead of 4*s*. 2*d*. it is 5*s*. 8*d*.

6441. I meant that in reply to your remark, no great variation of wages had taken place since the sliding scale?—I am wrong there. In 1888 it is quite true that there was a general rise throughout the country.

6442. In what manner did you agree upon the variations in 1888, or since 1888, was it by meeting the men?—We met the men, but generally we followed what was general throughout the kingdom at that time, and followed the advance, which was more or less general.

6443. When you say you met the men, is there a miners' association, an association of workmen, in the Cannock Chase district?—There is.

6444. And it is that body whom your association met?—Yes, representatives from the different collieries.

6445. Have your men free houses?—No.

6446. Have they any allowance of coals?—They have an allowance of coal, 16 cwt. per month.

6447. What are the hours of labour in the collieries in the Cannock Chase district?—About nine hours from bank to bank, in some cases less.

6448. Is it of the hewer that you are now speaking?—I am speaking of all classes in our district.

6449. Would it not be better, if their hours vary, to state the hours of the leading classes of underground men?—There is really no variation. We draw eight hours, and the hewers go down with the day men and they all came up practically at the same time. Some of the stall-men, as we call them, or the hewers, remain after the pit is done drawing occasionally; but if the pit draws full time all the men have practically the same hours, except as it is varied by men having to go a shorter distance in the pit or who may be employed at the bottom, and get away sooner, whereas some would be eight hours and a half and those at longer distances would be nine hours from bank to bank.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6450. From what time in the morning do you begin to lower?—At seven o'clock.

6451. At what hour do you begin coal drawing?—At half-past seven o'clock.

6452. When do you cease coal drawing?—We have half an hour interval in the day. We cease drawing for the day at four o'clock.

6453. Half-past seven till four o'clock then?—Yes.

6454. That is eight hours and a half?—That is eight hours and a half; that is half an hour for breakfast.

6455. And then after four o'clock, when the pit has ceased coal drawing, all the men begin to go out?—Yes.

6456. And are all out about when?—About half-past four o'clock.

6457. So that the first man who went down might go down at seven o'clock and he might come to bank at half-past four?—He might do so.

6458. What are the hours of the surface men?—The surface men have 55 hours per week. I am speaking of the mechanics at the present time. The time of the surface men on the banks is practically the same as the drawing of the pit.

6459. Not more than eight hours?—They may work eight hours and a half.

6460. Your system is that of one shift?—One shift.

6461. One shift of all classes?—Of all classes I may say that is as far as coal drawing is concerned. There is a great deal of work to be done in our roads at night, and we follow up three shifts really independently of coal drawing.

6462. Have you had any strike in your district lately?—There was only that one which was general in 1890, between the 15th and the 22nd of March.

6463. What was the cause of that strike?—That was really a general advance; it was asking for an advance of ten per cent. in wages, and that was general.

6464. How did it result?—It resulted in the men getting ten per cent.

6465. Was that in two instalments?—No, that was in one instalment.

6466. Have you had any local strikes lately?—No, there have been very few, and when I say local strikes, it is not applied to the stoppage of a whole colliery, but only a very small question between the managers and the men, none of any importance.

6467. Have you any joint committee or other body to whom such local questions are referred?—No, the local questions are generally left to be settled between the managers and the men, unless it happens to be a question which really would affect all the collieries. There might be a question arise at a certain colliery, and it might be thought that that was a question that really affected the whole of the district, and in that case the masters would try and settle the matter by meeting the representatives of the men.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6485. Before passing to any other subject, do you wish to make any further observations on the question of hours?—No, I think not.

6486. I see you have expressed a desire to offer some evidence as to sanitation; do you consider your mines healthy?—Yes, they are healthy and roomy. The roads and working faces are roomy.

6487. As to ventilation, what do you say?—The ventilation is very good indeed in our district, and the temperature is very uniform and not high, about 64 degrees Fahrenheit.

6488. You have also expressed a desire to say something about profit sharing, what have you to say upon that subject?—Well, my view about profit sharing is that it is totally inapplicable to the coal trade, for the simple reason that there is such a very great variation in the condition of different collieries that if the good collieries were to go in for profit sharing the poorer collieries would have to try and deal with the men, and ask them to take a lower rate of wages, and ultimately the poor collieries, even if they were not making any money, would have to pay actually the same rate of wages as the good collieries would have to do. I consider that a sliding scale is the nearest approach that could possibly be made to profit sharing.

6489. Do you mean in that industry?—In that industry.

6490. Perhaps you will kindly look at the answer given by your association on page 6 to the question: "Can you suggest any means of "avoiding or arranging strikes and promoting "cordial relations between capital and labour?" Will you kindly read the answer of your association?—"This association is of opinion that "in the event of the award of an arbitrator or "umpire, or of an agreement between an asso- "ciation and the men not being carried out, "that the defaulter should pay compensation."

6491. Would you like to enlarge upon that?—I think that the answer wants context. Really I think that I represent the views of the association in saying that if a sliding scale could be established on an equitable basis, and that a greater stability were given to sliding scales than they have had in the past, that it would be a very good thing. What I mean, simply as a suggestion, is this: In the past we have had a hard-and-fast line, a certain advance to the men, a fixed sum for every advance in price. The wages in our district are regulated by what we call the "holer's day," or "stint," and in all agreements it has been based upon a sum practically of 3*d.* to 1*s.* There has been no graduation either at the top of the scale or at the lower part of the scale. Now if a sliding scale could be established with a certain range like that, and then, in order to meet the views of the men, the lower part of the scale graduated so as not to induce the masters unduly to lower wages, and then, if again there were some references in the sliding scale to arbitration when the wage got beyond a certain point, and if masters and men on either side were made responsible for not carrying out the arbitrator's

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

award for a certain time, I think we would get a very large cover, and would very probably get over a certain time when a strike might otherwise be involved. What we want is a longer range and a greater graduation or something equivalent.

6492. In what sense do you use the term "a longer range," a range of what?—In the sliding scales the range has been fixed absolutely, say a certain advance of wages for a certain advance in price.

6493. Those are minimum and maximum?—Those are minimum and maximum, and in time of very good trade, as was the case when the first award was made, the matter was not taken into consideration that the prices would fall as low as they did within a very considerable amount. Therefore the matter was not dealt with, and in the last scale again which was made, on the other hand the scale was not made to reach the present price of coal.

6494. The present low price, or high price, which?—The present price of coal is higher than was put in the sliding scale agreement.

6495. You think that a sliding scale in your district, if re-established, should have no limitation upwards or downwards, or at any rate should have a much higher maximum?—It ought to be a larger range, and, I think, a graduated range, because you cannot reduce men's wages below a certain point, and the question is when the lowest price in any of those previous scales has been reached. Naturally if it was carried without limitation on the same basis it would reduce the men's wages perhaps to a lower point than they could really bear. But that might be modified by having a graduated scale when it gets below a certain price.

6496. Graduated in the sense of a less variation in wage, to a given variation in price?—To give variation in price to the same; but less reduction for the same amount as the standard reduction in price.

6497. Are most of the men employed in the collieries at Cannock Chase members of the Miners' Union?—They are now.

6498. Is there any difficulty experienced in the working together of the unionists and non-unionists?—No, I cannot say that it is very serious, there are so many of them in the Union. There is just the common question of riding with the non-unionists. There is an objection; it is not on the part of the better class men, and it is not of such importance that we have had to take any notice of it.

6499. You have not had to make arrangements for riding separately?—They have gone down alone, but it does not interfere with the drawing. There have been so few cases.

6500. Do the employers make any difference in the treatment of the unionists and non-unionists?—Not the slightest.

6501. Have you any black list, as it is called?—No.

6502. Is there any other point upon which you desire to speak before being subjected to examination?—No, I think not.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

6503. About this sliding scale: you say that the last sliding scale was terminated by the men in 1883?—Yes.

6504. And that they objected to any sliding scale on principle?—I would not like to put the thing in a very specific way. There were one or two meetings of the men, and the thing dropped through without any specific points of difference; but the general feeling was that a sliding scale was not applicable. I may mention, in connexion with that, that one difficulty with the sliding scale, and I think that it will rather apply to our district, is this: that having fixed the sliding scale and certain charges or prices for getting coal fixed upon that sliding scale, and certain local circumstances, the improvement of the seams, which are very variable in our district, may lead to a manager of a mine asking for a reduction in the charter; and I think there were differences of this kind which really led the men to think that a sliding scale was objectionable.

6505. They did not, however, formulate their objections?—They did not formulate their objections. It died a sort of natural death. We had four or five sliding scales, and, I think, most masters and men were rather tired of them. I think that is the meaning of it.

6506. And you said, in case of having a sliding scale re-established, you would like to see it constructed upon a somewhat different basis?—I did.

6507. Were any difficulties caused by the old form of the sliding scale?—There were no actual difficulties. I think it may be taken, to a certain extent, that the sliding scale was an advantage to our district, because between 1874 and 1883 we had some 12 or 13 adjustments of prices, with only one strike. But, at the same time, in my mind a sliding scale wants to have more cover than it really has. We want to guard over certain periods. The times that the difficulties arise in the sliding scale are either when wages are very high, and when the trade is very good, or when the trade is very low, and then there is a tendency for a sliding scale to be broken through, and that is the time that we should have a cover in any sliding scale if the full benefit of a sliding scale is to be got.

6508. Was that the cause, do you think, of the abandonment of the sliding scale in 1883?—No. I do not think that it was, because, practically, the prices that were in existence at that time regulated the matter for about five years without any alteration.

6509. So that, when you speak of the necessity of having a larger range and a graduation at the top and bottom of the scale, your views are not derived from any actual experience that you have had?—No, the questions have not arisen, but simply a question has been discussed in the association with regard to this question, as to either the men or the masters paying in case of any default in carrying out any award.

6510. Has the association ever approached the men with the view of re-establishing the sliding scale upon a better basis?—No, they have not.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

6511. You do not know whether such a proposal as this would be entertained by the men?—I could not say. The fact is, from the commencement of the present good trade, that the miners have been active generally throughout the country, and an association has really followed the general result of the application of the men.

6512. You suggest the payment of compensation in case of a breach of any agreement come to between the association of the owners on one side and the association of the men on the other?—Quite so.

6513. Would you have that enforced at law?—Well, I am not prepared to say that we would like anything enforced by law, except this: if in the case of any simple arbitration it is broken, certainly we should, but in connexion with this sliding scale I do not see that legislation could be forced in carrying out the sliding scale agreements in every district.

6514. Would you demand that a certain sum should be deposited by each association at the time that the agreement was made, or how would you propose to enforce this compensation?—I would make it part of the arbitration. I think that the masters and the men should render themselves liable for any default of the arbitration.

6515. That the men should be liable through their association you mean?—Yes.

6516. And similarly the employers through their association?—Quite so. I think that we have got no direct argument to bring forward so far as our district is concerned, because although the union is strong now it has not been strong for a very considerable time. But we all know that there is a tendency at certain times for the executive to be unable to control the men as much perhaps as they would desire, and I think it would be much better if the executive, who are responsible people, in any award, should understand that they would be responsible for any breach of covenant on the part of the men.

6517. And you think that there would be no difficulty in making the funds liable in case of breach of agreement?—There might be some difficulty; that is a question. If there were legislation there would not be any difficulty, that is in the case of any simple award.

6518. An arrangement of this sort could be come to without giving express legal sanction to it?—It would be much better in that way. Anything would be much better without legislation in questions between master and men.

6519. But to carry it out implies very perfect organisation on both sides, does it not?—It does.

6520. Therefore you would like to see the miners as perfectly organised as possible?—I believe that the better organised the miners are, and subject to being under the control of the executive, it is very much better to deal with the men.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

6521. If, for instance, there was a very large number of non-unionists in the district it would be exceedingly hard to come to an arrangement of that sort?—It would be in that case.

6522. Because you would have no hold over a mere aggregate of units; and you could not come upon individual men in case the agreement was broken?—You could not. I consider that as long as the Union is entirely a voluntary Union, and the men join voluntarily, it is very much better for the masters to deal with a full body than having separate individuals to deal with.

6523. With regard to the effect of a legislative eight hours' day, you have explained to the Committee what you think the economic effect of that would be, and the views you express are those of the association you represent, I suppose?—Is that with regard to the last question, or what?

6524. I have now passed to the subject of the legislative eight hours; you have explained to the Committee what the economical effect of the legislative eight hours' day would be in your district?—Yes.

6525. Do you express the views of your association on that question?—Quite so, with regard to the increase of cost.

6526. Do you know the views of the miners themselves on that question?—It is a very difficult question to answer. Of course the representatives of the Union are very much in favour of an eight hours' day. All the union men would be in favour of an eight hours' day, so far as we can hear expression of their views; but I am not at all sure that that is the feeling of a great many of the men. I think that we hear more of the expression of the men through the Union than is arrived at by individual opinion. I may say this, that many men, without any leading questions at all, have expressed their opinion to me that there is no object in an eight hours' day, and that they cannot see the meaning of it.

6527. When you speak of the Union, do you mean the Union in your district?—I am speaking of the Union in our district; they are in favour of an eight hours' day.

6528. In expressing themselves in favour of an eight hours' day they follow the line taken by the Miners' Federation rather than speak the desire of their own district?—I should think they do.

6529. At the present time the hours run to nine from bank to bank for the hewers?—Yes, for the hewers.

6530. In addition to that nine hours they sometimes remain voluntarily in their stalls?—No, not over the nine hours. When the pit draws three-quarters some of them may stay a full day and they very frequently do, but never beyond what is represented by nine hours.

6531. You spoke of the hours in different parts of the country having adjusted themselves to the different conditions of the various districts?—Yes.

6532. Supposing by legislative enactment you were now to make those hours uniform, would

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

not the economic effect be exactly as if the legislature were to fix different rates of wages in the different districts. Let me explain myself more clearly. You start now with differences, but those differences equalise the balance of advantage and disadvantage in other respects. If now you alter that balance by establishing an artificial uniformity of hours, would not the economical effect be the same as that of determining the rates of wages in different parts of the country, fixing them for part of the country at one rate and another part of it at another rate?—Yes, I think it would, because whatever the advantages were, if you were to legislate for an eight hours' day, then you might legislate for a rate of wages to adjust itself to the various ways in which the different districts had been prejudiced by the eight hours' day.

6533. Things have now found their level. You disturb that level?—Yes.

6534. You disturb it by insisting upon uniformity of hours all over the country?—Certainly.

6535. You would disturb it in the same way by arbitrary changes in the present rates of wages?—I think it would be equivalent to that.

6536. Are there collieries in your district which would be prejudiced by a legislative eight hours' day, so greatly as to make it necessary to close them?—There are one or two, even at the present time, that are very nearly being closed. I do not know that I could say positively that any one of them that are represented in the association would positively close, but if we had the same depression of trade and the same time of depression that we had from 1876 until comparatively recently, then I consider that several collieries would be closed.

6537. What are the royalties paid in your district?—Well, the royalties vary from 6*d.* per ton; I think you might say 6*d.* would be an average.

6538. They differ in the different mines?—Some are paid for by the foot per acre, and some by the actual ton—the sale ton.

6539. But the value of the royalties would differ in different mines?—In different mines. There are some as low 4*d.*, and some higher.

6540. Where the mine is favourably situated, from the economical point of view, the royalty would be high I presume?—It does not always necessarily follow, because some of the leases are of considerable long standing, and they might be favourably situated with regard to royalties although better situated economically.

6541. What is the length of lease as a general rule; does it vary?—I think it varies from 40 to 60 years. There are some very much shorter, some very much less; but take the large collieries, I think that is about the term. Our colliery has a 60 years' lease.

6542. It would not be possible in introducing a change of this kind to throw the burden of it upon the owners of the royalties?—No, certainly not.

Sir *William Lewis.*

6543. You referred to various scales. You do not appear to be aware that a variation at different prices in the scale has been tried in some of the districts, that is to say, that one shilling rise between eight and nine shillings has yielded to the workmen a lower proportion than when the price of coal has reached say from eleven to twelve shillings. That was the graduation I understood you referred to in your answer to the Chairman?—That is the meaning of it.

6544. Then you are not aware that that has been tried in some districts already?—Well, I think that I was not aware of it; it is a thing that escaped my memory. I simply say that I consider that it is a necessary thing that when it gets within an approach of what is really a minimum wage for the man, that it would be quite fair to cover that by allowing a comparatively minimum reduction in the wage. What we want is to have a sliding scale put upon such a basis that it will perhaps cover the time when these sliding scales are also much disturbed, that is the highest or the lowest term, and by doing so, then the men would be able to see more fully the situation, and a strike might be averted.

6545. Am I to understand that you would make the scale applicable for a longer term of years, so as to cover good times and bad times?—Well, I do not know. It is rather difficult to say; let the thing be done that is best; it may be absolutely impossible; owners may say they cannot carry collieries on at a loss, and, do what you will, you cannot make the thing permanent, and it might be an unsafe thing that the scale should be fixed for two or three years. But I would put the graduation, and then a reference to arbitration beyond this; if things got very low, it might cover losses, and get over the times when there was a disagreement between the masters and the men.

6546. Then you are not aware that there has been a scale without top and bottom, and others have had a bottom but no top?—I do not know in these scales whether there was a reference to arbitration in them afterwards.

6547. No; it was a bare sliding scale arranged between the owners and workmen, and in some cases, as you may probably be aware, the scales have been terminated by the workmen at a particular state of trade, and by the owners at another state of the trade?—Quite so. I admit that my view of the matter is that it is an excessively difficult thing to come to any permanent arrangement—it is absolutely impossible to come to any permanent arrangement—and it is very difficult to arrive at an arrangement which would cover a long period of time. But I make my answers more directly in reference to this question as to the case of default of either masters or men, and I think by a reference to arbitration in a sliding scale in case of such variation beyond any range of sliding scale the arbitrator might determine for a certain time; then let the thing be carried

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

on for six months, and if not carried out for that time let the defaulters pay; the object of that being that it might cover a period by which either masters or men might be able to see their way more clearly.

6548. Have you had many cases of arbitration between the workmen and the employers in your district?—We have only had three cases of arbitration that I can think of in connexion with the sliding scale.

6549. But not as to ordinary disputes as to prices in the colliery?—No; that we leave as much as possible between the managers and the men, and our association only deals with those questions so far as they involve broad issues that might affect all the collieries.

6550. Do you think there would be any advantage in the introduction of arbitration in settling matters that are now settled between the managers and workmen in your district?—Well, I do not know that I answer for the association; they have generally thought that that was as good a way to settle matters as any; you refer simply to local disputes, I suppose?

6551. Questions arising from day to day between the managers and the workmen as to the conduct of the colliery. Would you consider that it would be an advantage that these questions should be settled by arbitration from time to time?—No; representing the views of the association, I think at the present time they are disposed to think that all those individual questions should be settled between managers and men without reference to arbitration. I think in many cases one has the opportunity of really discussing the thing more thoroughly; the men know the question more thoroughly, and they would rather settle the question if they possibly could themselves than feel that all those cases must be referred to arbitration.

6552. I did not quite understand what proportion of the men are in the workmen's Union in your district?—I should say they are very nearly all in now, the underground men and the men employed on the surface, the banksmen as we call them. We have a great number of banksmen on account of the loading. But the men connected with the getting of coal or loading of the coal on the bank are practically all in the Union now.

6553. From your past experience of the workmen's Union in your district, do you think that there would be sufficient funds to meet such a payment as would arise by way of compensation for breach of agreement?—Well, I should think there very shortly will be.

6554. I am talking of the past; you have had prosperous times during the last few years?—The only time that I can go back to would be in 1873, when the Union had very large funds, they then would have been able to have dealt with this question, certainly, but as a matter of fact there have been comparatively few in the Union during all the times of bad trade; in fact since 1874 the Union has gone down, and numerically it has been very weak.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

6555. Have you had any experience in your district of men in the Union declining to be bound by their representatives?—No, I could not say so.

6556. To what extent do the workmen in your district avail themselves of the provisions of the Act of Parliament for inspecting the mines from time to time?—They never avail themselves of it. About 17 years ago two of the men were deputed at the pits to go round and make an inspection, but that lasted a very short time. They did not care about doing it, and the thing has fallen through.

6557. And that would apply generally throughout the district?—That would apply generally throughout the district.

6558. You said, in reply to a question of the Chairman, that it was impossible to have the double shift in that district. Would you mind saying for what reason?—Well, the double shift would simply involve double output in our case.

6559. Or a restriction of the area of the colliery, and you might have the same output?—One could not do that very well, on account of the long way of working.

6560. You work with your roads along the face, do you?—We have the long wall way of working; and coal in our district ought to be worked at a certain rate; you can work it too fast or too slowly. Unless the face progresses at a comparatively uniform rate, which is something like 90 yards, perhaps, in the course of a year, it is prejudicial to the getting of the coal.

6561. Then is your coal now principally worked by the Nottingham system of long wall?—Practically, it is the same as the Nottingham way, but the conditions of roof are rather different in our locality.

6562. How do you arrange about your three shifts that you have mentioned as carried on. I suppose there are two shifts practically for repairs in that case?—Yes, in some of the collieries they only have two shifts, but in some other collieries, and especially when there are a great many repairs, the day is divided into three shifts, really of working shifts, and the examination of workings—the workings are examined once in each shift.

6563. Then the men do not change in the face?—The men do not change in the face.

6564. You spoke of the arduous work of the people who hew the coals. Do your hewers as a rule do anything besides getting the coal?—Yes, when they have the opportunity. Of course, the working in a stall is rather varied, and they are not obliged to be holing the coal all the time. They may assist in setting trees and building of cogs, which is a great relief.

6565. But you have men specially set apart for putting up these?—No.

6566. Have you no repairs?—Not in the working face.

6567. But apart from the working face?—We have men in the roads, or we get the men out of the stalls into the roads to repair, but that is separate work. All the timbering in the face is done by the men themselves. We have the stall system, where two men with a certain length of face are responsible for everything in that stall, including the setting of the timber.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

6568. Would you say that the men in the face are engaged more than three-quarters of their time in getting coal in actual holing, bringing the coal down, and putting it into tubs?—Do you ask if they are engaged more than three-quarters of their time.

6569. I am putting to you a question as to whether they are engaged three-quarters or a little more than that in getting coal, &c., I wish to know that?—Taking it all round, and the distance they travel, it would be about three-quarters of the time, as six is to eight.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

6570. You spoke of this general strike in 1890, how long did that last?—A week.

6571. Do you remember how it was settled; I mean by what process?—Well, I do not think there was much process about it at all. It was a general agreement. I may say that we individually and our association had nothing at all to do with it; our local association had nothing to do with the settlement as regards the meeting of the men.

6572. Was there a meeting of employers and employed?—Yes, of the general association.

6573. Do you remember the resolutions which were arrived at?—I forget exactly what the resolution was, but I think that it was agreeing that the 10 per cent. should be conceded, and that no reduction should be made up to a certain time.

6574. Do you remember whether this was the resolution: that wages should be advanced 5 per cent. immediately and another 5 per cent. in August of 1890, and that there should be no further advance during that year?—Yes, that was the resolution.

6575. I asked you the question because I understood you to say a little while ago that it was 10 per cent. in one instalment; it is a matter of history, and I wanted to put it right. Supposing that wages were to fall to the level which they obtained in 1887 or 1888, do you think that the men would then be willing to be debarred from working more than eight hours?—Do you mean eight hours from bank to bank.

6576. I mean eight hours from bank to bank. Assuming that the wages drop again to the point they reached in 1887, do you think that the men would be willing not to work more than an eight hours' day?—I think nearly all the best men would object to it.

Mr. *Tait.*

6577. Are you aware that in Cannock Chase the hours that have been worked by the miners there are longer than in Northumberland and in Durham?—The hours of the men working in the face are slightly longer; it is six and a half to seven hours in the north, whereas it is what

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

we call eight hours with us, and nine from bank to bank.

6578. Therefore they are working from one to two hours at least longer than the men of Northumberland and Durham?—My contention is that the system is entirely different. If a man was working at getting coal all the time, undercutting coal, then there would be more analogy between the conditions of working.

6579. But are the conditions of getting coal not the same in Cannock Chase as in Durham and Northumberland?—No, I consider not; we work the long wall, and they work by the pillar and stall; ours are worked more on a contract system.

6580. Physically speaking on the part of the miner it is the same?—The undercutting of the coal is; it is physically as great.

6581. Have the miners in your locality made any approach to your associated colliery owners to reduce the hours?—No.

6582. Did I rightly understand you to say that the basis of the sliding scale was 3*d.* in the shilling?—Yes, 3*d.* to 1*s.* advance.

6583. I presume that would be 28 per cent. of the selling price?—It depends upon the price; of course the per-centage will vary according to the price of the coal.

6584. What was the basis of the scale; was it about 25 per cent.?—Do you mean the proportion between the advance of the wages relatively to the advance of the price?

6585. No, I meant what constituted the basis of the sliding scale—presuming, we will say, that coal was sold at the pit head at 6*s.* per ton, did the miner get 1*s.* 6*d.* per ton for getting it?—No, the basis of the 3*d.* is, as I tried to explain, on the holer's day or stint, it is 3*s.* 6*d.*, we will say, or 3*s.*

Mr. *Dale.*

6586. Do you happen to have a copy of the agreement of the 22nd of June 1882?—I have a copy of the agreement here. (*See Appendix* 14.)

Mr. *Tait.*

6587. I understood you to say that the basis of the sliding scale was 25 per cent. of the selling price of the coal?—I did not say so.

6588. Can you give us an idea of the amount you pay on cost for your collieries in Cannock Chase for rents and everything at your collieries out with wages?—Apart from wages?

6589. Apart from wages?—I would say 1*s.* 3*d.*

Mr. *Dale.*

6590. Do you mean including royalty rents?—Including royalty rents and everything—what we call the general cost

Mr. *Tait.*

6591. Now, when you had any sliding scale to submit to the men did you submit the book of the colliery proprietors to the men for their inspection so as to satisfy them as to the amount of profit you were making, and as to the necessity for an advance of wages or a reduction of wages?—No, we did not submit the books. The men had their own auditor for getting at the average selling price, and the masters had their auditor for the same purpose; but it had nothing at all to do with profits.

6592. Have all the strikes that have occurred in your district been upon wages, either for an advance or against a reduction?—Yes.

6593. You mentioned the sanitation of your collieries; it has been stated here in evidence that some miners' houses are in a very good sanitary condition; do the houses which the men live in belong to the colliery proprietors as a rule?—The colliery proprietors have very few houses in our district; a great many of the men in our district own their own houses.

6594. Are those that the colliery owners do have in a good sanitary condition?—Yes, fairly so; they are what we call five-roomed cottages.

6595. You mentioned the question of royalties; do you consider the royalty is a tax upon the industry?—Not relatively to other districts.

6596. I mean as a whole, not comparing it with any other district; do you think that if you were relieved of the royalty tax it would assist the colliery proprietors in carrying on the industry?—I do not know that it would a great deal—I do not see that it would.

6597. Can you give me an idea how often your collieries are inspected by the mines' inspectors?—As a rule, the inspector simply comes when there is an accident. Of course we report every accident that has the slightest chance of becoming serious, and they pay occasional surprise visits, which, of course, are not very frequent.

6598. Can you give me an idea of the area that the inspector in your locality has to cover?—I do not think I could off-hand give you the number of collieries.

6599. Is there any system or arrangement with the employers who are in your association for determining the price of coal or reducing it?—The association has really nothing at all to do with selling price except indirectly. I mean to say there is nothing binding upon the association as to price.

6600. Then one individual member of the association can lower or heighten his price as he thinks fit?—He can if he likes.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. FRANK WILLIAM THOMAS BRAIN called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

6601. You are a mining engineer in the Forest of Dean, I believe ?—I am.

6602. And a past vice-president of the National Association of Colliery Managers ?—Yes.

6603. You are now a member of the council of that body ?—I am.

6604. Was the National Association of Colliery Managers incorporated in February 1889 ?—It was.

6605. Had it for its principal object the improving of the scientific and intellectual position of colliery managers, and supporting and protecting their character, status, and interests ?—That is so.

6606. And other kindred purposes ?—Quite so.

6607. Is it an association whose membership extends over all the colliery districts of the United Kingdom ?—We have branches in all the twelve inspectors' districts of the kingdom.

6608. It is not confined to managers engaged in coal mining necessarily ?—To certificated managers under the Mines Regulation Act.

6609. It would extend, of course, to ironstone mining ?—Yes.

6610. Have you and your colleague, Mr. Fairley, been appointed by the council of that association to give evidence ?—We have.

6611. May we take it that the evidence which you will give is evidence not only of your own individual opinions but of the body whom you represent ?—That is so.

6612. There are certain of the questions addressed by this Commission to employers' associations on which you specially desire to give evidence, I believe ?—Yes.

6613. The first of those, I think, appears under our heading "Conditions of labour—"irregularity of employment through seasonal "or other causes." Will you kindly state what you desire to say on that subject ?—From information obtained from the branches throughout the kingdom it appears that the loss of time by the coal hewers amounts to from 20 to 25 per cent., owing to persistent neglect of work. The effect of this serious irregularity of work tends to lessen the safety of the mines, as in order to maintain working places in a safe condition it is essential that the coal face should be moving regularly. In addition to this the workmen are physically less fit to follow their usual employment.

6614. Do you mean physically less fit because they have taken a certain amount of rest, or because of abstention from work ?—As a matter of fact we find after holidays that the amount of work done does not compare favourably with the work which is obtained from the man who is in regular employment.

6615. Of course this abstention of which you speak will include all ordinary cases of sickness or accident ?—Certainly.

6616. That which is unavoidable as well as that which is avoidable ?—Certainly.

6617. Are you able to say what proportion the one bears to the other ?—I could not say.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6618. From what area is this per-centage deduced; I mean is it derived from the Forest of Dean, or is it derived from information obtained from members of your association in all mining districts ?—It is derived from information given to me by members of our association in the different parts of the country.

6619. And that is averaged in order to get at the result that you have stated, is it ?—Yes, we have averaged the statements made to me.

6620. No doubt in some districts the time lost would be less, possibly, and in some it might be more ?—That would be so.

6621. Do you desire to offer some expression of opinion on the sanitary condition of the mines ?—Yes. In the opinion of this association the sanitary condition of the mines has been considerably improved by increased ventilation, and mining has been proved to be a healthy occupation.

6622. What do you desire to state as to the inspection of working places ?—From statistics and information obtained by this association through its branches it has been estimated that the workmen at only 10 per cent. of the collieries of the kingdom have availed themselves of the facilities afforded to them for inspection under General Rule 38 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1887; and the natural inference is that the workmen are perfectly satisfied with the precautions taken to ensure their safety. I should like here to read a resolution from the South Wales central branch of our association, sent to me within the last few days, of which the following is the text: "That we emphati-"cally deny that any undue pressure is used to "prevent the proper inspection of the workings "of the mines; but that as managers we encou-"rage the periodical inspection of workings by "the workmen." Our experience is that the present system of inspection is most thorough and ample.

6623. You are now, of course, speaking of the inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors ?—Yes, quite so.

6624. The previous sentence had reference to inspections by the workmen ?—Yes. To pass on, our experience also is that any further legislative interference would not be advantageous, as it would interfere with the responsibility of the management.

6625. That would not necessarily imply that an addition to the number of inspectors was not desirable; your remark that any further legislative interference would not be advantageous has no reference to the number of inspectors ?—No, that is so. Under the working of the present Act the decrease in the loss of life has been considerable. This is largely due to the great care exercised by the various officials appointed under the Act, whose routine of duty requires them to visit and examine the working places at frequent intervals each day, for the enforcement of which the manager is personally responsible. It has, however, been found that in some districts the system employed by the men of compelling the deputy overmen, who are officials

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

under this Act, to become members of their trades unions is detrimental to the good discipline of the mine, as it is not possible for a deputy to exercise his authority in an impartial manner under such circumstances.

6626. You desire to offer some observation as to the class of persons whom it is desirable to appoint as inspectors of mines?—Yes. We have observed that it is proposed to appoint working miners as Government inspectors of mines, who would exercise all the powers under the Coal Mines Regulation Act. We are of opinion that it would be destructive of the best interests of Government inspection to introduce working miners (without the proper qualifications) as mine inspectors.

6627. In that statement do you draw a distinction between inspectors of mines and sub-inspectors of mines?—No distinction, we include inspectors and sub-inspectors.

6628. You are aware that working miners have been appointed sub-inspectors?—Yes, with proper qualifications.

6629. Has it been proposed to appoint working miners as Government inspectors of mines without proper qualifications?—I think so.

6630. What would you regard as a proper qualification?—We think, seeing that many of the colliery managers at present holding first-class certificates of competency have themselves been working miners that a mines' inspector who holds an official position superior to the manager of the mine of the colliery, and to whom the manager of the colliery would be subservient, should at least hold the same qualifications as himself and have a first-class certificate of competency.

6631. Then are we to understand that the opinion you have offered is not that it would be inexpedient to appoint working miners as Government inspectors, but inexpedient to appoint any persons as Government inspectors of mines who had not a qualification equal to that of a first-class manager's certificate?—That is so. We submit here a circular which this association placed before the Government and the House of Commons on the 9th of March last, when a motion was about to be made before the House for such an appointment (*handing in the circular. See Appendix*).

6632. I see this is a circular dated 9th March 1891, and that it is signed by the principal officers of the National Association of Colliery Managers. Is it addressed to the Home Secretary—it begins "Sir," and it does not say to whom it was addressed?—It was addressed to the Home Secretary, and to each member of the House of Commons.

6633. May I take it that this circular, which probably is too long to read now, expresses the view which you have just laid before the Commission?—Carefully considered by the council of the association.

6634. As to what ought to be the qualifications of an inspector of mines?—Yes. We draw the attention of the Royal Commission to the remarks of Lord Aberdare, reported in Hansard, volume 209, 1872, who, when dealing with this

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

request of the miners for such inspectors, said: "Many colliers asked for such an extension "of inspection that every mine should be "thoroughly examined and reported upon once "a quarter." "It was utterly impossible to "adopt that suggestion unless the Government "were prepared to take upon them the respon-"sibility for the management of the mines." He added that he proposed General Rule 30 of the Act of 1872 to meet this. That rule is embodied in General Rule 38 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1887, which gives the working miners the fullest power of inspecting the mine each month.

6635. Those remarks of Lord Aberdare do not seem to have reference to the qualifications for an inspector, but rather to the number of inspectors that would be needed if every mine had to be visited quarterly?—That was so.

6636. I believe you desire to make a statement with regard to labour-saving machinery?—Yes. Labour-saving machinery has been introduced to a very large extent as soon as it has became available in underground haulage, boring, and to a limited extent coal cutting, &c. By these methods the productive capacity of the mines has been greatly increased, and the result has been improvement in the condition of labour, economy in working, and an increase in the production of mineral per man.

6637. Is there any other point on which you wish to give evidence in chief before the members of the Commission examine you?—No; the wish of this association is only to give evidence so far as it affects the position of the colliery manager.

6638. Some of these statements, such as the amount of abstention from work, being derived from information which has reached your central association from its members in different parts of the country depend a great deal for their value upon the number of places from which that information has come, how far those places are representative, and so on; therefore I should like to know first how many members has your association?—Nearly 600; they are representative of all the mining districts of the kingdom.

6639. Is every inspection district of the United Kingdom in membership?—Each one.

6640. May we take it that from every one of those districts information has reached you upon which you have founded these averages?—Generally.

6641. Does this include Scotland?—Yes.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

6642. You put the loss of time by the coal hewers at from 20 to 25 per cent. for the whole country, I think?—Yes.

6643. Could you put in the averages in the different districts?—I have not the figures at hand.

6644. You do not happen to have noticed whether the loss of time is greater in those districts which work longer hours?—I could not say.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

6645. Would it be possible for you to prepare a statement showing the loss of time in the different districts?—I will endeavour to do so. (*See Appendix* 15.)

6646. You stated, I think, that mining was proved to be a healthy occupation; have you any statistics to support that position?—As corroborative evidence I might state that a large friendly society, the Ancient Order of Foresters, which has thousands of miners in its branches in all parts of the kingdom, some year or so ago proposed through its central committee, I believe, to increase the contributions of miners on the score of their occupation being more unhealthy than the ordinary occupations. The miners' delegates themselves appeared before the High Court, and placed such figures before the general body of Foresters that the proposed increase was quite put aside, in fact, wholly disposed of.

6647. The proposed increase, then, was abandoned at the instance of the miners themselves, who produced figures showing that there was not sufficient justification for it?—That is so.

Mr. *Burt.*

6648. You have, I think you said, 600 members of your association; how many colliery managers will there be altogether in Great Britain?—Considerably over 2,000, I believe.

6649 Then the figures that you have given of loss of employment on the part of the coal hewers have been sent in by these 600?—By some of them.

6650. By some of them, not by the whole of the 600?—No.

6651. You think that is a sufficiently broad basis on which to make a general statement to the effect that the coal hewers lose from 20 to 25 per cent. of their time?—600 is a fair proportion.

6652. But you said that they had not all sent in a return; that it is only a portion of the 600 out of the 2,000; do you think that it is quite a sufficient basis on which to make a statement of that kind?—Well, it may or may not be.

6653. I think you have already said that there is not any division of districts—that that is simply a general average according to the figures that have been obtained—so that you would not be able to say what is the per-centage, say, in Northumberland or Durham?—My colleague who will follow me can speak definitely as to a district.

6654. As to one district?—As to one district.

6655. Not as to the whole?—No.

6656. I think you said with regard to this loss of time, whatever it may be, that it includes all loss of time from sickness and from accident as well as from intemperance and other causes that we all deplore?—That would be so.

6657. Are you aware that according to the returns of the various Miners' Permanent Relief Funds there is a very large proportion of men who suffer from minor accidents?—I believe so.

6658. With regard to the examination of the mines, you stated that according to the evidence you had been able to collect about 10 per cent. of the miners avail themselves of the opportunity that the Act gives them?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

6659. That, too, will be a general average, I presume?—I have detail for that.

6660. Could you give the districts?—I could give the districts.

6661. If you would kindly do so I should be obliged?—At the time this return was made to us we had branches in Scotland, in the North of England, Lancashire, Yorkshire, North Wales, North Staffordshire, South Staffordshire, the South-Western inspection district, and South Wales.

6662. What was the date of that return?—About July in last year. Out of all the inquiry forms sent forth we received replies from 1,006 mines, 846 reported no inspection under the 38th Rule, and 160 reported inspection.

6663. But you have not given the districts?—I can give them in detail if you wish.

6664. If you please?—From Scotland we had 223 returns, 199 non-inspections, 24 inspections; from the North of England 134 returns, 63 non-inspections, 71 inspections; from Lancashire 114 returns, 113 non-inspections, 1 inspection; from Yorkshire 132 returns, 116 non-inspections, 16 inspections; from North Wales 9 returns, 9 non-inspections; from North Staffordshire 123 returns, 123 non-inspections; from South Staffordshire 25 returns, 25 non-inspections; from the South-Western district 44 returns, 39 non-inspections, 5 inspections; and from South Wales 93 returns, 52 non-inspections, and 41 inspections.

6665. Have you ever heard objections raised by the miners to the inspection on the ground that after an inspection if an accident has happened there has been an attempt to bring them forward as evidence of the satisfactory condition of the mine?—No.

6666. With regard to the Government inspection, I did not understand you to object to an increase in the number of inspectors?—We do not object.

6667. You are aware, I presume, that of late years, say during the last 8 or 10 years, there has been a considerable increase in the number of inspectors?—That is so, I believe.

6668. And especially of sub-inspectors?—That is so, I believe.

6669. Are you aware that prior to this increase the same objection, namely, that an increase of inspection would relieve the employers of responsibility, was urged as you have now put forward?—Possibly.

6670. Now with regard to the appointment of working men as inspectors, I think, in answer to the Chairman you, said that you do not object to working men being appointed, but you object to unqualified or insufficiently qualified inspectors?—That is so.

6671. That really is your position?—That is so.

6672. Has anybody to your knowledge advocated the appointment of a workman simply on the ground of experience and without qualification, or with a very inferior qualification?—Yes.

6673. Who?—The working men advocates.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

6674. You do not mean that anyone in the House of Commons representing the miners has advocated any reduction whatever or any diminution in the nature of the qualification?—No.

6675. Now with regard to mining being a healthy occupation, you had reference to health only and not to safety, I presume?—That is so.

6676. Because as regards its liability to accident you will admit, I presume, that it is rather a dangerous occupation?—Yes.

6677. And probably it is on that ground that many of the insurance companies demand a higher premium from miners?—Unjustly so, I think.

6678. But, as a matter of fact, they do?—Yes.

6679. And I suppose they may be presumed to know their own business?—Not life insurance, I think.

6680. In general, do they not?—No life insurance company I think does.

6681. They do not?—Not that I am aware of. I can speak from personal experience anyhow. I have had no extra premium to pay as a consequence.

6682. You are not aware of any insurance company which demands a higher premium from working miners than from other classes of workmen?—I am not aware of any life insurance company that does.

Sir *William Lewis.*

6683. I gather from your evidence that you would think it undesirable to lower the standard of examination for persons, workmen or others, who have to be appointed as inspectors?—Extremely undesirable.

Mr. *Mawdsley.*

6684. I should like to ask you why you made no effort to separate this 20 to 25 per cent. of absences as between accidental stoppages and wilful neglect of work; why was there no effort made to separate the two?—It did not occur to us so far as I am aware.

6685. Could you not, as a practical man, give some idea as to the per-centage of time lost by what I may term accident or stoppages of the work and sickness of the men?—I could not.

6686. Does it not strike you that giving a lump per-centage like that, which includes all sorts of stoppages, may be liable to be misconstrued by people who do not look properly into the matter. It might be taken that it represented the whole of the wilful neglect of work by the miners?—I should think not.

6687. We had from West Lancashire the other week a gentlemen who gave the stoppages in West Lancashire, including sickness of miners, at about 16 per cent. Would you take the other 5 to 10 per cent. in your case as representing the loss of work through the stoppage of the mine or accidents in the mine?—I expect it would be representative of some of each—some

Mr. *Mawdsley*—continued.

from actual neglect of work and some from unavoidable causes.

6688. I do not know how the other members of the Commission feel about it, but if it were possible I for one should like to have the information as to how much time is lost by the men through their own neglect, and if your association could supply us with reliable information upon that I am sure it would be a point upon which we should all be pleased to be informed I did not quite catch whether Mr. Burt asked you a question which I wished asked namely, do the working miners wish to have men belonging to their class appointed inspectors without an examination?—Do you wish me to speak for the general body or to speak from isolated statements?

6689. You can speak either way; but tell us which way it is?—I take my view from isolated statements.

6689*a*. Of whom?—Of miners' advocates.

6690. How have they made these statements, at public meetings or to you personally?—At public meetings.

6691. At public meetings?—Yes.

6692. And you have reports of these statements in your possession, I presume?—I have had. I could not possibly say if I have them at this moment.

6693. How does it strike you that they have made their statements? What have they said? I do not mean the exact words, but what do you remember of it generally?—The inference I drew from the statements would be that the proposal was to appoint practical working miners from the men to positions as sub-inspectors, for instance, who would not necessarily pass the examination which would qualify them for a colliery manager.

6694. Are you certain that the impression was left on your mind "who should not necessarily pass an examination"?—I am positive.

Mr. *Fowler.*

6695. No responsible person—no responsible body—has ever asked that the mining inspector should not have an examination?—I cannot say that it has.

6696. No responsible person has done so, and you give us no evidence to show that anybody representing the miners has ever asked for such a thing. You have rather by insinuation or implication implied that such has been done, and now when Mr. Mawdsley asks for the evidence there is no evidence?—Not that I am aware of.

6697. You are aware, I have no doubt, that no working man mining inspector is now appointed who has not passed an examination?—That is so.

6698. The rule of the Home Office is that he must pass an examination equivalent to the examination that you yourself have passed?—That is so, I believe.

6699. And no responsible person has proposed to interfere with that?—Not officially.

6700. I mean no responsible representative of any miners' union has asked that that should be

Mr. *Fowler*—continued.

altered; what they have asked for is that some working men should be appointed inspectors who had complied with the examination test; now is that not the fact of the case?—I think it will be within the recollection of the Commission that at the Trades Union Congress there was a proposal to appoint working men inspectors.

6701. Without examination?—Without qualification.

6702. Mr. Burt shakes his head at that, and I think we may too. (Mr. *Trow.*) It is perfectly true, even though Mr. Burt does shake his head?—I know the vote was taken upon that, and the qualification which we speak of was the one insisted on.

6703. And that you have no fault to find with?—That we have no fault whatever to find with.

6704. I think that is the point to get clear, that you have no fault to find with the test. If the inspector does pass your examination, that is, a manager's examination, for a first-class certificate, you are satisfied?—We are satisfied.

Sir *William Lewis.*

6705. In regard to the per-centage of absentees, it might be of service if we had the exact question which was put in, asking for this information from the various districts; that might throw some light on what Mr. Mawdsley has been endeavouring to get from you?—I have no such information here unfortunately. (*See Appendix* 15.)

6706. If we had the question before us we would know then whether the question was such as to lead to a return embracing sickness and accident as well as people neglecting their work. You say 20 to 25 per cent. were

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

absent, but the returns might embrace sickness and accident, as suggested by Mr. Burt?—The question was not raised at all.

Mr. *Dale.*

6707. In furnishing us with the return asked for, please remember that in any general average you must make it clear that it is upon the shifts or days offered. Of course, it will be quite clear that if the colliery was laid in, if no work was available, that must not be reckoned as a period of abstention from work; make it quite clear in sending in your return on what basis it rests?—Yes, I will do so.

6708. As I understand the form of it will be that you will give us in respect of each of the separate districts the returns made by that district upon which you have produced your general average, and we will understand (it had better be stated fairly on the face of it) that it is based upon the number of shifts offered, and that it includes abstentions from all causes?—Yes.

6709. My attention has been called to the official resolution passed at the Trades Union Congress in Newcastle this year on the subject of additional inspectors. The resolution as adopted appears to run: "and also to appoint "additional working men inspectors for mines "provided they possess the necessary qualifica- "tion." You will not, of course, I am sure, desire to impute to the official body representing the Trades Unionists of the United Kingdom anything that they had not formally adopted. So far as they are concerned it would appear that their official resolution did put forward a suggestion for additional working men inspectors, with a provision that they possess the necessary qualification?—We are pleased to find that they are at one with us.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. WILLIAM FAIRLEY called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

6710. You are a mining engineer I believe, residing at Rugeley, in Staffordshire?—Yes.

6711. You are a Fellow of the Geological Society, Vice-President of the National Association of Colliery Managers, and have acted as mineral agent to the Marquis of Anglesey during the last 13 years?—Yes.

6712. You also worked in coal mines when a lad, and have had 40 years mining experience?—I have.

6713. Have you collected information for the purposes of this Commission, at the request of the Council of the National Association of Colliery Managers?—I have.

6714. I believe you desire first to speak with respect to the South Staffordshire collieries?—I can give a little information with respect to the South Staffordshire collieries in one or two cases.

6715. Would you proceed to do so?—At the Great Wyrley Colliery, from figures that I took from the books ten days ago I find the follow-

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

ing as to the wages of the coal cutters in the shallow coal seam: the average earnings per day amounted in 1886 to 4*s.* 3·5*d.*; in 1889 to 5*s.* 2·8*d.*; in 1890 to 6*s.* 2·2*d.*; and for the fortnight ending November the 18th of this year to 7*s.* 3*d.*; so that in this case the earnings of the hewers have increased over 68 per cent. since the year 1886. That is the average of the whole of the men engaged in working stalls in that case.

Sir *William Lewis.*

6716. In the shallow seam?—In the shallow seam.

Mr. *Dale.*

6717. Having before me the official table perhaps I ought to ask you to say what have the averages been for this year, not for the fortnight ending November alone, but for such previous fortnights as you may have taken?—I can give you them for four fortnights in this

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

year. For the fortnights ending October 7th, 1891, 6*s.* 6·8*d.*; October 21st, 6*s.* 10·9*d.*; November 4th, 6*s.* 11·8*d.*; and November 18th, 7*s.* 3*d.*

6718. Has there been any change in the rate of wages since the end of 1890?—Not since 1890.

6719. Therefore, the same general rate of wages prevailed during the whole of the months of October and November of this year?—Yes.

6720. The 7*s.* 3*d.* for the fortnight ending November the 18th is not an average, inasmuch as it is a good deal more than that which is assigned to the previous fortnights?—There is no difference in the rate per ton to the workmen, but the average shows that they have earned a greater amount per day for some reason than they did 12 months ago.

6721. Still, would it be fair to take the 7*s.* 3*d.* for comparison with 12 months ago, and to exclude the 6*s.* 2*d.*, the 6*s.* 6*d.*, the 6*s.* 10*d.*, and the 6*s.* 11*d.*?—No, that would not be fair, but for some reason there seems to have been a gradual going up in the earnings, which may be occasioned by the work being a little more favourable in some way.

6722. Are most of the men in the South Staffordshire district members of the Miners' Union?—The greater part of them are in the Union.

6723. What do you desire to say in regard to the per-centage of men absent from work at the South Staffordshire collieries?—There are probably 15 per cent. of the men absent, or 15 to 20 per cent. Although I have looked at the books of this particular colliery, I could not very well get an average; but I should think it must be 15 or 20 per cent.

6724. By 15 or 20 per cent. do you mean in relation to the number of shifts worked or offered?—Yes, that would be it.

Sir *William Lewis.*

6725. You said 15 to 20 per cent., I think?—Yes, 15 to 20, that is in this South Staffordshire district.

Mr. *Dale.*

6726. Is the Great Wyrley Colliery a fairly typical one?—Yes, I should think it would be.

6727. Your statistics on this point are derived from that colliery?—Yes, it is about an 800 or 900 tons a day colliery.

6728. Are you acquainted with the Cannock Chase Colliery district?—Yes. There is a colliery adjoining, in which only about one third of the men are in the Union, where the men are at the present time working, I believe, a day and a quarter every day.

6729. What does that mean exactly? What is the mode of operation? Do you mean that they are voluntarily remaining a fourth longer under ground than is actually required of them in the ordinary usage, or what?—I mean to say that they have a trade, and there is an opportunity of their working an extra quarter, and that they willingly do so on being asked to do so by the owner.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

Sir *William Lewis.*

6730. Did you name the colliery?—The Cannock Old Coppice Colliery, near Stafford.

Mr. *Dale.*

6731. Do you wish us to draw any particular inference from this statement?—I have not drawn any inference; I thought I should like to mention the fact that it is so.

6732. To be quite clear, I understand you to say that at this colliery, whose name you have given, in the Cannock Chase district, the state of trade lately has been such as to induce the owners or managers of the colliery to ask the men to work time and a quarter instead of ordinary time?—That represents my impression.

6733. And that they have acceded to that request?—They have.

6734. You desire, I believe, to speak of the North Staffordshire coal field also?—I have obtained, through some of the members of our association, particulars with respect to the North Staffordshire coal field, and extracts from their colliery wages sheets; likewise I have a diagram which represents from 1866 up to the middle of the current year, the number of days the pit has worked, and the number of days the men have worked, and the average earnings each month during this time. This is the diagram [*handing in a diagram*].

6735. What North Staffordshire colliery does this diagram refer to?—The Whitfield Colliery [*explaining the diagram*]. The blue line represents the number of days the pit has worked, and the red line represents the number of days the men have worked, and you will see that generally the red line is below the blue line.

Sir *William Lewis.*

6736. Are the fluctuations shown in the diagram illustrating the average earnings of the miners, due to the different number of days worked by the men?—That would be so.

6737. They are not due to any advance or reduction in wages?—No, they would not be.

Mr. *Dale.*

6738. How many men does this North Staffordshire colliery of which you speak employ?—1,139 men. 198 are employed on the surface, and 941 under ground. The average attendance at work was 965.

6739. That was during the week ending June 30th, 1891?—Yes.

6740. I think it would be impossible to follow the table of earnings of the various classes of men, skilled and unskilled, and the maximum and minimum amounts; could you, therefore give us broadly and generally what the hewers' earnings are?—The hewers' earnings range from the maximum of 6*s.* 3*d.* to 5*s.* 9*d.*, and the timberers from 6*s.* to 4*s.* 10*d.* The firemen have 7*s.* a day; the roadmen have a maximum of 5*s.* 9*d.*, and go down to a minimum of 5*s.* 6*d.*;

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

and the ostlers have a maximum of 4*s.*, and a minimum of 2*s.* 6*d.* That embraces the whole of the underground wages.

6741. We are now speaking, I take it, of this North Staffordshire Colliery?—Yes, it is a typical colliery of the North Staffordshire district.

6742. What are the hours of underground men?—Nine hours down the pit.

6743. Nine hours from bank to bank?—That would be about it, nine hours from bank to bank.

6744. One shift of men, I suppose?—One shift of men.

6745. One shift of all classes of underground workers?—Of all classes, except the repairers at night.

6746. That I quite understand. In your proof there follows a good deal of technical detail in regard to the system of working there. I do not think that it is necessary to go into all that?—It is principally long wall working in this district.

6747. Would it be a satisfaction to you to read the information given on page 4 of your proof, beginning at No. 9?—I will read it. As far as practicable the piece-work system is adopted, and payments are made at per ton of mineral raised. The underground is divided somewhat as follows: A certain length of coal face, with gate road, is let to two or more stall men, who employ helpers and loaders. These men get and deliver the coal to the main road. From this point it is taken in hand by haulage contractors, whose duty it is to provide the necessary waggoners (putters), and pay drivers to convey the coal to the shaft, for which they are paid a tonnage rate. The hookers-on or outsetters at the pit bottom, and the banksmen, are also paid at a tonnage rate. By this system the wages of the contractors throughout depends on the amount of mineral raised, and it follows that every endeavour is made to get the largest possible quantity in the time worked. In many cases the contractors' stall men and haulage men pay their day men by the piece, that is, loaders at per ton, holers at per yard, and waggoners or putters at per score tubs. The ripping, or taking roof down to make height in the roads, is generally done by the colliers, and is paid for as an extra at per yard. The day men, paid directly by the proprietors, are the firemen or deputies, and the men employed in timbering, repairing, and improving the roads, and in many collieries a large staff of men is required for this purpose. The surface men generally are paid by the day, although, where it is possible, piece-work is given them. I have prepared a table showing the day wages paid.

6748. In that table of wages is the addition or deduction shown?—Yes. Since the time that this table commenced, from 1882 to 1891, there has been an advance of about 45 per cent., so that the enginemen who in 1882 got 3*s.* 8*d.* to 4*s.* 6*d.* are now getting 4*s.* to 5*s.* a day, and so on with the rest.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6749. Is the base rate, so to speak, changed, or do you maintain the former and lower one and add a per-centage?—The original rate is maintained.

6750. The 3*s.* 8*d.* to 4*s.* 6*d.* becomes 4*s.* to 5*s.* by a certain addition to the 3*s.* 8*d.* and the 4*s.* 6*d.*?—That is so.

6751. I see the next item on your proof is the "hours of labour." Does that still refer to the North Staffordshire coalfield?—Yes.

6752. You have told us what the underground hours are, what are the hours of labour at the surface?—The average is nine hours per day, or 54 hours per week, but there is a little alteration from that in each day, for instance for the first five days, Monday to Friday, 9½ hours are worked, and on Saturday 6½ hours. There are two intervals for meals, half an hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner.

6753. Which of course are not included in the 54 hours?—No; the hours of labour underground are nominally eight, and the actual time worked at the coal face varies from 7¼ to 7½ hours. The actual time from bank to bank, inclusive of the usual half hour for meal time, is a little under nine hours, except on Fridays when half an hour extra, and on Saturdays when half an hour less is worked. The actual time from bank to bank and worked at the face varies considerably in accordance with the conditions of the different pits, the depth of the shafts, number of men employed, and length of time taken up in travelling to and from the working places. It may be taken that the average time taken up in winding men up and down will be not less than 30 minutes in pits where only a moderate number are employed. The men do not as a rule leave the shaft bottom, or the inspection station, until the time for commencing to draw coal, and most of them are at the shaft ready for being wound up as soon as coal winding ceases. The actual time taken for coal winding is eight hours with an interval of half an hour in the middle of the shift for meal time. Overtime for both surface and underground workmen is paid at the rate of eight hours per day, and night shifts at the same rate as day work. Sunday work at the rate of six hours per day. It is generally found that the day-wage men are willing, and even eager, to work overtime, and as most of the repairs and other works for maintaining the roads and plant have to be done after coal winding has stopped, it is often necessary that overtime should be worked. As far as possible Sunday work is avoided. The weekly half holiday for surface men on Saturday is, as stated above, earned by working the extra half hour on the previous five days. The underground men leave work 1½ hours earlier on Saturday than on the first four days of the week. This is made up for by working half an hour extra on the Friday and commencing an hour earlier on Saturday. The diagram which I have handed in will show practically the variations in the time worked by the coal getters; it applies, I may say, only to coal

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

getters, and not to the other class of men for the past 5½ years, not taking into account the general district holidays in August, when almost all works are closed for a full week. The actual average number of days worked and earnings are shown by another table which I have prepared. With your permission I will read this table of the colliers' average of earnings and days worked from 1886 to 1891. In 1886 the average time per man was 5·51 days, the average daily wages 4*s.* 5·04*d.*, and the pits worked five days; in 1887 the average time per man was 4·78 days, the average daily wages 4*s.* 3·62*d.*, and the pits worked 5·35 days; in 1888 the average time per man was 4·69 days, the average daily wages 4*s.* 4·45*d.*, and the pits worked 5·61 days; in 1889 the average time per man was 4·73 days, the average daily wages 4*s.* 10·65*d.*, and the pits worked 5·68 days; in 1890 the average time per man was 4·44 days, the average daily wages 6*s.* 3·05*d.*, and the pits worked five days; in 1891, at the end of the first half year, the average time per man was 4·48 days, the average daily wages 6*s.* 7·72*d.*, and the pits worked 5·82 days. From these figures it will be seen that whilst in 1886 the pits wound coal on an average five days per week, and the colliers worked 5·51 days per week, earning 4*s.* 5·04*d.* per day, in the first six months of the current year, although the pits wound coal for 5·82 days per week, the average time worked by the colliers was only 4·48 days per week. The increase of average earnings to 6*s.* 7·72*d.* per day appears to be the reason of this neglect of work, at any rate in part. This neglect of work is one of the greatest difficulties colliery managers and owners have to contend with at the present time. The average weekly earnings for 1886 were 24*s.* 4*d.* per week, and for the first half year of 1891, 29*s.* 9*d.* per week. It will be seen from these figures that although the prices paid have been increased upwards of 40 per cent. since 1886, the average weekly earnings of the miners are only now about 22 per cent. higher than in that year, and that the discrepancy is entirely due to the fact that the men are now working less time than when wages were lower. The daily wages earned show an increase of over 50 per cent. The diagram which I have handed in also shows the alterations in wages during the period mentioned, and it is interesting to note that when wages were low and the pits were working badly the men attended their work regularly, but as soon as work began to be more regular and wages to rise (as was the case in the latter part of 1887 and the year 1888) they began to neglect their work, and they have continued to do so, until at present they are losing something like 25 per cent. of the time actually available for work. The loss in wages does not represent the sum total of the loss sustained; the pumping, ventilating, and other establishment charges are being constantly incurred, and in addition to these the timber cost is largely increased. In order to maintain the working places in safe condition it is essential that the coal face should be

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

kept advancing regularly so as to get from under the broken roof, and the workings are laid out so as to allow this to be done, but in consequence of the irregularity of the men's attendance it frequently happens that the roof sinks, and the timber in the working places is broken before it can be removed with safety. The risk of accidents from falls of roof is also increased from the same cause.

6754. Then do you desire rather to contrast what you think affords ground for complaint in the North Staffordshire district with the somewhat reverse action of the men in the Cannock Chase district?—In what respect do you mean?

6755. It was in the Cannock Chase district that you said the workmen were working really a shift and a quarter?—Yes, that refers to one colliery only that I know of; I mentioned that simply as being a matter of fact.

6756. But you did not intend us to infer that in the Cannock Chase district that is general?—No, it is an exceptional case.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

6757. Did you not say that in North Staffordshire also the men were willing to work overtime?—Yes, they are willing to work overtime in many cases.

Mr. *Dale.*

6758. Would you like to make any observation as to that, because the statements which you have just made rather imply that the high wages are causing a considerable loss of time, but on the other hand, in reply to Mr. Balfour just now, you say that in that same North Staffordshire district there is a willingness to work overtime; does the one remark apply to one class of men and the other to another class?—The remark I made applies only to that particular colliery in South Staffordshire where they work the extra quarter.

6759. Not in North Staffordshire?—No.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

6760. South Staffordshire, that is Cannock Chase?—Yes.

6761. I think you said in North Staffordshire also men were willing to work over the time?—I think in cases of taking down ripping, the men do not object occasionally to work overtime—to do that instead of working on coal.

Mr. *Dale.*

6762. Do you desire to offer any other observation upon the question of hours and the time occupied, or the time lost?—No, it does not occur to me at present to make any further observation.

6763. I think you wish now to say something about the safety of employment and inspection?—Yes

6764. As you have alluded to more than one district, it might be well to make it clear of which district you are speaking?—I am speaking now of North Staffordshire.

6765. Continuing to speak of North Staffordshire?—Yes, the inspection is complete. Two

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

or three inspections per shift are made by the officials appointed under the Mines Act. Every case of accident, fatal or otherwise, reported, is carefully investigated, and the site examined by the Chief Inspector of Mines or his assistant; and in addition frequent underground inspections are made by the inspectors. The workmen do not avail themselves of their powers under General Rule 38, which I believe is very well known, namely, "that persons employed in "a mine may from time to time appoint two of "their number," and so on, to make periodical inspections on their behalf. The natural inference is that they are perfectly satisfied with the precautions taken to ensure their safety. It appears that no useful purpose would be served by the appointment of working men inspectors. The officials appointed to make inspections under General Rule 4 of the Mines Act are invariably taken from the ranks of the working miners, and have even more interest in maintaining the workings in safety than working men Government inspectors of mines would have, as not only the lives of their fellow-workmen but their own depend on their carefully and constantly carrying out the Mines Act in their department.

6766. Are you referring there to General Rule 4 or General Rule 38?—To General Rule 4 in the Act: "A competent person or competent "persons appointed by the owner, agent, or "manager for the purpose, not being contractors "for getting minerals in the mine, shall, within "such time immediately before the commence-"ment of each shift as shall be fixed by special "rules made under this Act, inspect every part "of the mine."

6767. It is not the appointment of working men under rule 38?—No, it is another rule. The impression amongst colliery managers in our district is that some of the miners' agents have interested themselves in bringing forward a Bill with regard to mines' inspection, and that their object was to get inspectors of mines appointed with a qualification inferior to that of a first-class certificate. That is the impression they have had, and I believe evidence has been given before this Commission to that effect that the miners of South Wales would be satisfied with an inspector if he held the qualification which was equal to a second class.

6768. When you say that no useful purpose will be served by the appointment of working men inspectors, do you mean if they had a lower qualification than that of a first-class certificate?—Yes, that is what I mean myself, and that is what is meant by the association that I represent generally.

6769. That is what we are to understand?—Yes.

6770. I presume that if they possessed a qualification equal to that of a first class certificate, you would regard their practical experience as having a value?—Most eminent, they would be most eminent men; we should consider them proper men to have the appointment. The large majority of working miners have

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

only experience in the detail manual labour of coal getting, and it would be manifestly unjust to colliery managers who have undergone a lengthy and careful training in all the branches of colliery work and mining to appoint such men to superintend and, in a manner, to control their work.

6771. You wish to say something as to apprenticeship?—Yes. At present there is no system of apprenticeship amongst miners, but it is a question whether some such system would not be a distinct advantage both to masters and workmen. Boys enter the pit at the age of 12 or 13 and work as waggoners and pony drivers until 17 or 18; they then commence as loaders, and many continue to be so employed until 30 years of age or over. Some of them, however, after working as loaders for a few years commence work as hewers. The loading is by far the most laborious work in the pit, but no skill is required, and whilst so employed the men have rarely proper opportunities of learning the more important work of coal getting. If, however, the youths could be properly trained as hewers or coal getters, it seems reasonable to suppose that the standard of skill would be raised; in fact some few of the stall men do take lads in to work direct from waggoning, &c., and whilst they are learning pay them in proportion to the work they are able to do, and it is generally found that youths who are so trained make the most skilful workmen. No manager would knowingly and willingly engage incompetent and inexperienced men, as by doing so he is only adding to his own already heavy burden of responsibility; but men he must have, and the neglect of work is so great amongst the miners that he has frequently to make shift with men who would not otherwise be employed.

6772. I suppose you do not mean to imply that the manager would not observe the provision of the Act of Parliament, under which there must be two years' experience of a certain kind?—No, he would not be able to act contrary to the Act of Parliament; he must go in accordance with the Act of Parliament in any case; still there is sometimes a difficulty in getting properly trained men.

6773. I only want to know exactly what you mean by the latter part of your previous answer; it is to be read, I suppose, in connexion with what preceded it about the apprenticeship system?—That is it.

6774. Have there been any serious disagreements between the employers and employed in the North Staffordshire district?—Not since the strike of 1883, which lasted about 18 weeks.

6775. What caused that strike?—That was a question of wages, which was eventually settled.

6776. Do you mean it was an owners' claim for a reduction, or the men's claim for an advance?—The men claimed an advance.

6777. Which was refused?—It was granted them.

6778. What was the result of the strike?—There was an advance at that time.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6779. It resulted in the men obtaining an advance?—Yes.

6780. Perhaps you would go on with what you desire to state?—The wise policy of the Miners' Union in the district of leaving the owners and the workmen to settle minor points of dispute between themselves has been the reason of this satisfactory state of things, and there can be no doubt that where the managers and the men can meet and fairly discuss questions of dispute, there will be less difficulty in arriving at an amicable settlement, as both parties will be thoroughly acquainted with the facts of the cases in question to an extent which no person who has to rely upon *ex parte* statements can possibly be.

6781. Then, of course, there is a miners' union in North Staffordshire?—Yes.

6782. Is there a coal owners' association in North Staffordshire?—Yes.

6783. Do those two bodies hold official communication with each other?—Generally the questions are settled between the masters and the men.

6784. I was referring to general wages changes, district changes; how would a change in the wages of the whole North Staffordshire colliery district be brought about?—That would be arranged between the two associations.

6785. The Coal Owners' Association and the Miners' Association?—Yes.

6786. Is there any sliding scale?—There is no sliding scale that I am aware of.

6787. Has there been to your knowledge?—No.

6788. Local questions, as I understand by the statement that you have just made, are settled between the owners or managers and the workmen of the colliery at which they arise?—Generally, directly between the two.

6789. I think you desire to offer some evidence as to the effect of a compulsory Eight Hours' Bill?—Yes; the effect would be generally to shorten the day by one hour—that is the winding of coal by one hour—and, as has been already shown, the actual time worked at the face is now only about seven and a quarter hours.

6790. And this would leave the working shift what?—Six and a quarter hours, and would also reduce the hours available for winding coal to seven hours, and as most of the pits are fairly occupied during the whole of the time the effect would be to reduce the output, and consequently the miners' wages, where they work by the piece, by at least 12 per cent. The hours now worked are reasonable, and do not exhaust a man as did the long hours (10 and 12) formerly worked. A proof of this is seen in this district, where many of the miners are also small farmers or crofters, and are able to and do work on their land for hours after they leave the colliery. During the 20 years which have passed since the hours were reduced very great improvements have been made in colliery winding and hauling machinery, and the improvements in these repects have been very marked in North Staffordshire, and no doubt the increased facilities for winding the coal, and the application of mechanical contrivances, are the principal reasons why the average get per man has been so much increased. Even if it were possible for the men to do the same amount of work in an hour's less time, the attempt would do them more harm than the fair and reasonable hours now worked. Many of the men now voluntarily work overtime occasionally in their working places to do their packing, timber drawing, and other work, which cannot be done without interfering with the coal getting, and it would be unjust to such men, who are generally the steady and regular workers, to limit their hours and consequently their wages. The liability to accident would be greatly increased if the men were working against time, which probably would be the case if the eight hours were enforced by Act. I have a table here which shows the general alterations from February 14th, 1881, down to August the 6th, 1890, when the last 5 per cent. advance was given.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6791. Perhaps it might be sufficient just to state this, that that table shows that there was no change in wages apparently between July 1885 and October 1888?—That is so; and then there was a 10 per cent. advance given.

6792. In the year 1889, what?—There was a 5 per cent. advance given.

6793. And again?—In October of the same year another 5 per cent.

6794. And in the year 1890?—On the 1st of January, 10 per cent. advance again; on the 17th of March, the same year, 5 per cent.; and on the 6th of August, another 5 per cent.

6795. Therefore in the year 1886, no change; in 1887, no change; in the latter part of 1888, 10 per cent. advance; in 1889, two advances of 5 per cent. each, making 10 per cent. for that year; in 1890, three advances of 10 per cent., 5 per cent., and 5 per cent. respectively, making 20 per cent. for that year; and since that period wages have remained without general change?—Yes.

6796. A few minutes ago you said that the adoption of facilities for the winding of the coal and the application of mechanical contrivances are the principal reasons why the average get per man has been so much increased; have you any table showing to what extent it has been increased?—No, unfortunately I have no figures by me to show that. The Government Inspector's returns show that. I should think during the last 30 years there has been about 80 per cent. increase per man.

6797. Would that be per man per shift or per man per annum?—Per man per annum.

6798. And notwithstanding the decline in the number of days worked per annum?—I can hardly say that there has been a decrease in the average working days during the last 30 years, as we have not got complete particulars.

6799. Can you at all say whether there has been an increase in output per man per annum

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

as between 1886 and 1891?—Yes, there is a slight increase.

6800. Even over that period?—Over that period.

6801. That is to say that slightly more coal is got in the year 1891 by 4·48 or 4½ days per week than in 1886 by 5½ days per week?—With regard to production per man, my observation refers to the whole kingdom. The table from which you have quoted the number of days worked only refers to this particular district.

6802. You have not got that information with regard to this particular district?—Yes; I do not happen to have the exact figures for each district.

6803. Therefore your remarks about the increase of get per man refer to the United Kingdom?—As well as to this district.

6804. But not to this district specially?—Yes, to this equally with the others, I should say.

6805. In fact, then, in regard to the North Staffordshire district, you would be inclined to say that the get per man per annum is larger in 1891 than in 1886?—I should say so, but I have not the figures.

6806. Although the days worked are fewer per week?—Yes.

6807. To what would you attribute that?—I have no doubt it is due to the mechanical appliances, and to the improvement in machinery.

6808. Of course it is not a long period over which to expect improvements to be made between 1886 and 1891. Is there any other matter on which you desire to tender evidence, before members of the Commission ask you questions?—Yes; the safety of the miners is very much improved, taking the country generally, during the past 40 years. Perhaps I might be allowed to mention some figures which I have got out during the current year. In 1851 there were 216,217 persons employed in the collieries, and there were 984 lives lost; that was 1 in 219 employed was lost or killed. Then going mid-way in the table, or somewhere about 1870, there were 350,894 men employed, and 991 lost, which gave a proportion of 1 in 354. In 1890 the number of men employed was 613,233 men; 1,160 lost their lives, and that gives a ratio of 1 in 529, that is for last year; so that there is a favourable comparison between the year 1851 and the year 1890, the first being 1 in 219, the last being 1 in 529.

6809. Is there any other matter on which you wish to offer evidence?—No.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

6810. You mentioned a colliery in the Cannock Chase district at which overtime was worked by the men; do you happen to know whether that colliery belongs to the Owners' Association?—It does not.

6811. Are the men who work there for the most part Union men?—For the most part they are non-unionists.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

6812. Do the unionists as well as the non-unionists work overtime there?—That I cannot answer you.

6813. And you do not know what the attitude of the Union is towards this question of overtime?—I have not heard of any difficulty.

6814. In North Staffordshire also I think you said that men were quite willing to work overtime, but chiefly in repairing work?—Some of them are rather anxious and willing to work overtime, some of the men who work in the face.

6815. Are they for the most part non-union men?—They would be all Union men in that district.

6816. You do not know whether the Union objects to overtime in their case?—Well, it would appear almost as though it does not; I should think not.

6817. Now you say that the effect of an eight hours' day would be to diminish output, and to reduce wages by about 12 per cent.; what is the attitude of the men towards the question of a legal eight hours' day?—I do not hear any of them desiring to bring about any eight hours' day.

6818. They have made no representations to the owners?—No, I have never heard any of them express any desire to bring it about; they do not seem to wish for it, in fact. I have never heard any of them express a wish to have it.

6819. As wages diminish you have found greater regularity of attendance at the collieries, I think you said?—The particulars that we have got together show that the attendance appears to have been more regular when there was not an inflated time.

6820. Do you consider that an eight hours' day, the primary effect of which would be, as you say, to reduce wages, would bring about greater regularity of attendance to compensate for that reduction?—I cannot say. It would have the effect of decreasing the production, as it would be taking off 12½ per cent. of the time of winding.

6821. But could not that decrease of output be made up by greater regularity of attendance if the men worked shorter hours, but worked more days?—Well, that might be so.

6822. You have not considered, however, whether one effect would balance the other?—I have not considered that, but that might be so.

Mr. *Burt.*

6823. The colliery that you mentioned at which the men worked overtime regularly, as I understand, is in the Cannock Chase district?—They are working in the shallow coal seam at present there. That colliery of the shallow coal of the Cannock Chase is immediately contiguous to the Great Wyrley.

6824. Are the ordinary hours the same there as at the other collieries, about nine from bank to bank?—Yes, the same; the ordinary hours.

6825. That will be about 11½?—No, not so much.

6826. You mentioned that in other parts many of the men voluntarily work overtime

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

packing, and so on?—That refers to North Staffordshire.

6827. Another district?—North Staffordshire, not in Cannock Chase.

6828. Does the Union object to that at all, or throw any impediments in the way?—I cannot answer your question.

6829. It has not come to your knowledge that such has been the case?—It has not come to my knowledge.

6830. Who is the agent? Is that Mr. Edwards' district?—Mr. Edwards is in that district.

6831. Are the pits now working full time in Cannock Chase?—No, they are not. There is not the demand for coal. They are only working partial time at several of the collieries, I should say four or five days a week.

6832. Is that having any effect at all on the attendance of the men when the pits do work?—The pits are working from four to five days a week, I should say, on an average. I do not know what particular effect it has on the men's attendance: there is always a large number of men absent on the pay Monday, whatever number of days they are at work.

6833. Is this loss of time mostly on the pay Monday?—There is a larger amount of time lost on the pay Monday.

6834. Have you weekly pays or fortnightly?—Fortnightly pays; draw once a week in cases where they require.

6835. You spoke of loaders; are they fillers of coal?—Fillers of coal, yes.

6836. Are they quite distinct from the "putters," as we call them?—Quite distinct.

6837. Then you have a class of men who do nothing but load the coal?—Yes.

6838. I think you said you had not had any very serious strikes since 1883?—No, not in North Staffordshire.

6839. Have there been any small strikes at individual collieries?—Not to my knowledge.

6840. You have no joint committee, I believe, in that district?—No.

6841. There has never been an attempt to form one, has there?—No.

6842. You mentioned, I think in answer to Mr. Balfour, or in answer to the Chairman, that the produce per man had increased during the last five or six years notwithstanding the less regular attendance of the men at their work, and you attributed that to mechanical appliances. Would not the mechanical appliances be mainly, if not altogether, connected with the transit of the coal and the getting out of the coal?—The effect of mechanical appliances is to reduce the number of men employed in a colliery. Where you put down winding machinery you reduce the number of horses, and you reduce the number of men required to attend upon and drive those horses, and so on.

6843. This calculation is based on the total number of men employed, not on the number of coal hewers?—No, it applies to all classes of men. All classes of men are included in the calculation.

Mr. *Dale.*

6844. I thought the divisor was the number of hewers?—No, the whole number of men engaged.

Mr. *Trow.*

6845. With regard to the employment of incompetent persons, do you think that the present Act is sufficient for the purpose?—Yes, I think the Act is sufficient in that respect.

6846. In reply to a question, I think by the Chairman, you said you could not evade the Act and had to conform to its regulations?—Certainly.

6847. We were told that the Act is evaded in this way (and I want to know from you whether it is a common custom): "The wording of the "Act is 'alone,' it says a 'person' shall not "work alone, but does not say 'persons,' there-"fore they put two together, and so evade the "responsibility." Have you ever known that done?—No, I do not remember that.

6848. Here it is further stated they have appealed to the inspector of the district, and that is his interpretation?—Yes, that may be so.

6849. You have never known it done?—No.

Sir *William Lewis.*

6850. Your evidence shows that where the men have an opportunity of increasing their earnings they work more irregularly?—The figures taken from the books seem to compel us to come to that conclusion.

6851. Could you give us any idea as to the increased cost of working of collieries due to this irregular working?—The increased cost would be on the timbering and on the maintenance of pumping apparatus. I do not know what it would amount to per cent.

6852. You have not made any estimate?—No.

6853. Could you give us an idea as to the increased cost that you think the collieries in your district would be put to by the establishment of eight hours instead of the present working hours?—The effect would be, I should say, to diminish the output by 12½ per cent., and the standing charges would all be the same; and, to arrive at that, you would have to divide the total charges by the diminished quantity of 12½ per cent. What that would amount to it is difficult to say.

6854. Would not your repairs increase greatly?—There would be a natural increase in the breakage of the roof. You are working an hour less; your face is advancing more slowly, and there would be an increase in timbering, and so on.

6855. But no increased safety?—There would be no increase of safety: a diminution in the safety, I should think.

6856. There has been a large increase in the number of men working under ground in your district of late years?—Yes, there has.

6857. Where have they been drawn from. Do the lads go in as soon as they are old enough?—Of course the families grow, and the natural growth of the population would account for

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

some of the additional hands. I think also there are a good many from the Shropshire district.

6858. Is it the custom for lads to go into the mines in your district immediately they leave school?—Yes, it is.

6859. What standard do they pass?—I think it is the 5th Standard.

6860. Is there any difficulty in getting lads to do lads' work underground?—No, there is no great difficulty at present.

6861. Then you suggested there should be some kind of apprenticeship served. Is not that done now by the lads going in and commencing a particular employment, and passing on from one grade to another?—That is done now, and seems to be fairly preferable to taking a man from surface work to work of that kind.

6862. Then, when a man is taken in who has had no previous experience, is there no care taken as to the particular place he is put to?—Yes, decidedly; he is put to something he is considered able to manage.

6863. Is he or is he not put to work with an experienced person?—Yes.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

6864. Do you consider that the hours now worked in the district you represent are injurious to the health of the workpeople?—No, I think not.

6865. That being so, would you think it right or otherwise to debar a man from working that length of hours?—I think it should be optional to the men.

6866. You pointed out that the general rule No. 4 provides for certain examination of the workings. Have you in your mind what would be the consequence of non-observance of that rule—I mean now the sub-section 57 of the Act of 1887 and sections 59 and 60? Do you remember whether these sections provide that any non-compliance shall first of all be an offence against the Act, and in the subsequent 59th and 60th sections the non-compliance shall be punishable by fine, or, in case of that not being sufficient, imprisonment. Do you recollect those?—Yes.

6867. Does it occur to you that those provisions are very onerous?—Yes, they are very onerous upon the manager.

6868. And whatever the amount of inspection, does that inspection relieve the owner, agent, or manager from the effect of these clauses?—No.

Mr. *Tait.*

6869. Does the tabulated statement of the days worked per week and the wages received per day appertain only to one colliery?—It appertains particularly to one colliery in North Staffordshire.

6870. Can such a statement be taken to be typical of the working of the miners in North Staffordshire?—In North Staffordshire, I think so.

6871. I think you said the men were 18 weeks out in the case of the strike of 1883 which you referred to?—Yes, about that.

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

6872. And at the end of that strike the men received all that they struck for?—I could not go into that. They received an advance at the end of the time of 10 per cent.

6873. Whatever the men demanded, at the end of 18 weeks the masters conceded?—They got 10 per cent.; that is all I can say.

6874. Can you say whether during that period during which the strike was running there had been any overtures on the part of the men to settle the dispute which was pending?—No, I cannot give you any particulars.

6875. Or on the part of the masters either?—I cannot give you any particulars.

6876. Have you any suggestion to make, the adoption of which would prevent these strikes taking place?—No, I have not thought out any plan myself.

6877. I think I gather from you that your association—the Colliery Owners' Association—and the men's association in North Staffordshire work agreeably together?—Yes.

6878. And you think they are well able to settle all disputes which may crop up?—Yes, I think so.

6879. Notwithstanding that the men that have represented the district which you come from went in for a universal eight hours' day for miners?—Yes.

6880. Do you think it would not very materially assist the colliery proprietor and regulate competition if there were some regularly fixed period of employment instead of one district being seven hours, and another seven hours and a half, another eight, and another nine hours a day?—I do not know exactly how that would be. The circumstances of every coal field that I have been in are so different that one system might not apply well all through the different districts. It has always been an eight hours' system in the North of England since I have known anything about it. When I was a lad I worked eight hours down a pit, and up to this day they are working eight hours a shift—that is, the shifters. It is precisely the same now as it was 40 years ago in the county of Durham. There is no difference whatever, that I know of as regards the hours.

6881. Did you think that long enough at that time?—It was long enough for me.

6882. You made a statement that you do not think any useful purpose would be met were practical miners to be made inspectors; do I understand that you do not object to the miners provided they can pass that standard which the Government thinks is necessary at the present time?—Yes. I think the most practical man is the very best man that we can have as an inspector. We should be delighted to see such men.

6883. You wish to have working men if they can pass the examination?—Yes, we should be very pleased indeed.

Sir *William Lewis.*

6884. Working men with first-class certificates?—With first-class certificates.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6930. Have there since then been minor strikes?—Yes, minor strikes.

6931. Nothing considerable?—No.

6932. Are wages now higher or lower than usual?—They are a little higher than they have been, but they are lower than they were many years ago.

6933. Was your Union in existence at the time of this strike at the end of 1885 and the beginning of 1886?—Yes.

6934. Did it support its members connected with that particular quarry?—Yes.

6935. It supported them financially as well as morally?—Yes.

6936. Can you tell us what your Union spent in connexion with that dispute?—10,207*l.* 5*s.* 4*d.*

6937. Have you estimated the loss of wages during the four months?—Yes, as well as I could.

6938. What do you estimate it at?—Between 45,000*l.* and 50,000*l.*

6939. You mean that from 45,000*l.* to 50,000*l.* was not earned which would have been earned had the men been at work?—Yes.

6940. Does any system exist in your trade and district for conciliation or arbitration or sliding scales, or anything of that sort?—None whatever.

6941. Have you endeavoured to bring about the establishment of any of those things?—Yes, several times.

6942. Can you suggest any means for avoiding or arranging strikes, and promoting cordial relations between capital and labour in your industry?—The only means I should think that would be available would be to establish boards of arbitration to represent both masters and workmen.

6943. Have you passed some resolutions upon the subject from time to time?—Yes.

6944. Will you give us the resolution that was passed on May 17, 1890?—There was a conference of quarrymen held at Carnarvon, and the resolution was passed: "That this conference of "the North Wales Quarrymen's Union desires "to draw the special attention of the Welsh "Members of Parliament to the advisibility of "introducing a measure to Parliament to establish arbitration boards to settle labour disputes, "and that a copy of this be sent to all the "Welsh members."

6945. Did you pass a further resolution on December 13, 1890?—Yes, there was a special conference of quarrymen held at Carnarvon on that date, and this resolution was passed: "That "this conference is unanimously of opinion that "Parliament ought soon to pass a measure to "force the establishment of boards of arbitration in connexion with every industry, so "that employers and employed may understand "one another better, so as to enable them to "prevent strikes and lock-outs, and may have "an opportunity to discuss important matters "such as wages and hours of labour." A copy of this resolution was sent to all the Welsh Members of Parliament.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6946. Did you pass a further resolution on the 16th May of this year?—Yes, it was passed at the annual conference held at Blaenau Festiniog: "That this conference is happy to find "the progress the eight hours' movement is "doing, and considers that the hours of labour "of the quarrymen ought not to be more than "eight hours a day; and, further, that we appoint "representatives to give evidence before the "Labour Commission on the eight hours' question, boards of arbitration, and other matters in "connexion with slate quarrying. We would "give the board full power to settle disputes "that may occur respecting wages, hours of "labour, and every other question that may "arise in connexion with slate quarrying within "their districts. The boards to be elected "annually and to be made up of the same number to represent the masters and workmen, "each to elect their own representatives."

6947. Before speaking of the hours question, would you like to give any special reason why you are feeling it needful in your district to press for boards of arbitration?—Yes.

6948. You spoke of there not having been, since this important strike, any strikes of importance?—No.

6949. But, notwithstanding this absence of recent strikes, you still feel it is necessary to press for some tribunal of this kind?—Yes; we have tried to get one, at the beginning of this year and at the end of last year—twice.

6950. I rather invite you to state what it is that induces you to take that view?—The failure of getting to meet the masters when any trivial questions arise, as they do very often, between the men and the masters, on the management. We think it is the general wish and opinion of the quarrymen of North Wales if we have such a board that we should prevent any such misunderstanding, and come to an amicable settlement of a great many disputes that may be serious to both employers and employed.

6951. Now then as to the hours question; are we to understand that this resolution of your conference, beginning "This conference is happy "to find the progress the eight hours' movement "is doing," &c., is an expression of opinion in favour of a legislative limitation of the hours of labour to eight?—I believe the quarrymen are rather divided upon the question whether it should be brought about by Parliament, but they believe it would be advisable if the masters and men could come to an amicable understanding on the subject: and working out in the open, and generally on high mountains, they think that eight hours is quite as much as a man should do, working hard as they do.

6952. Will you be kind enough to re-state what the hours are in winter and summer?—In the summer they are eight hours and a half and nine hours; they vary a little in different districts, but the average is that: and in the winter they are about seven, taking from October to March.

6953. I think you said that was exclusive of meal times?—Yes, and in making that up our

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

them some training?—Yes, but without any method.

6975. Have you anything to say about the machinery?—There are a few machines introduced into the slate quarries, such as drilling and sawing and dressing machines, as well as locomotives to draw the blocks and draw the wastes off the tips. They are provided, as a rule, by the masters, but the men are indirectly paying for them.

6976. What view do you wish to express upon the question of machinery?—Only that it is coming in but slowly in the slate trade—slower than in any other trade that I am aware of. But it does facilitate work, especially locomotives and the dressing and sawing machines.

6977. You mean you would wish to see more machinery introduced?—Yes.

6978. You think it is not introduced to the extent it might be?—Yes; it would be an advantage to lessen the hard labour of the men; but, at the same time, it may do away to a certain extent with a certain number of men.

6979. What do you mean when you say in your proof, "Waggons, trolleys, and other machines, as "well as locomotives, are supplied by the owners; "but the men pay indirectly for the use of them"?—By getting less poundage for working their bargain. They work the slate quarries by giving a certain price upon the slates made; then they are let to have a bargain monthly or for a longer period. They say to them, "Well, we will give you so much for the slates." They have a price list, and then you have so much in the pound upon what you make under that price list. Then they can reduce that poundage when they give the advantage of using the machinery, so that the men are, to a certain extent, paying indirectly for the machinery.

6980. Of course the machinery, if it lessened the men's labour, would enable the men to get out more in a given time?—Yes; but they would not get more wages.

6981. Have you any reason to complain of a black list or dismissal of Union delegates, or anything of that nature?—Yes, as I have said before, quarrymen are working on their contracts, and, legally, I believe the masters have the right to dismiss them at the end of their contracts. Some of these are monthly, others are longer. They take a certain piece of rock to a certain width or depth. But, as they are paid monthly, we maintain that the quarrymen are entitled to a month's notice or four weeks before they are dismissed. Last year we had a question in dispute. One member of our Union was dismissed without notice before completing his contract by a quarry manager. The company employing the said manager was sued in the county court. The judge ruled that his partner should be joined, so non-suited the plaintiff. An appeal was made in the High Court against Judge Bishop's decision, when it was held he was wrong. So the case was sent down for a new trial; but in the meantime the matter was settled out of court, the company paying to the workman the sum of 15*l.* and costs, as ordered by the Court of Appeal in London. Some of the workmen employed by the said company who took an active part as members of the quarry committee, and gave evidence at the trial in the county court at Blaenau Festiniog have failed to get employment in the said quarry or any other quarry in the neighbourhood. One of them has failed to this day to get employment, and some have gone to England and South Wales collieries. We maintain these men are boycotted for assisting a fellow workman who was wrongly treated by the management, and we are now endeavouring to have an investigation into the whole circumstances of the case, and are willing and ready to refer the matter to arbitration.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

6982. How long is it since the matter was settled by the payment of the 15*l.* and costs, a year ago?—Less than a year ago; last September twelvemonth was the time of the original dispute; it was the beginning of this year the settlement was made.

6983. Then there was no strike at the result?—There was a strike because this man was wrongfully dismissed.

6984. How long did the strike last?—Between a fortnight and three weeks.

6985. Then was the man in question re-instated?—No.

6986. Do you wish to say anything else upon the subject of the relations of the employer and employed?—There is one matter I would like to draw the attention of the Commission to. I do not know what power they may have, except power to appoint or to recommend the appointment of a board of arbitration. At the end of last year and the beginning of this year the quarrymen have approached the masters in North Wales, and wanted to meet them and try and get an advance in wages. They thought that the trade would allow it; and they asked first for a meeting, asked the masters to meet together and consider the matter; and, secondly, they asked the masters to appoint representatives to meet the representatives of the workmen to consider the matter. They failed in that too. Most of the employers at small quarries were quite willing to meet if they could get the employers of the large quarries to meet as well, but they refused; and we maintain that masters and workmen in slate quarries of North Wales are suffering enormously on account of this misunderstanding among the employers as to the price lists of the slates. We allege that the present misunderstanding among the slate quarry proprietors of North Wales involves a loss of about 150,000*l.* per annum. We further maintain that every person employed in our quarries loses 2*s.* 6*d.* a week through this mismanagement of the slate industry. It is admitted by many of the employers that an advance of 15 per cent. would be an advantage to the slate trade generally.

6987. An advance of 15 per cent. on what?—On the present list.

6988. In wages, do you mean, or in prices?—In prices, and then there would be an advance

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

in wages. The proprietors can agree fairly well on the price list, but they ruin the trade in the discounts allowed, so that it is almost impossible to know the actual net price they get for the slates.

6989. Do I understand you to mean that you think that the quarry owners of Wales do not understand the manner in which they could get the best price for their commodity?—They cannot meet together to come to an understanding; they are underselling each other; that is what we maintain.

6990. Is it the fact in the slate trade that there is a certain price list, and that when slates are dear that price list has a percentage added to it; that the prices are maintained, and the variation in market price is expressed by percentages up or down?—That is the way they have. They have a new price list as a rule once a year, and then they vary that by so much discount.

6991. And you think a better understanding between the quarry owners of Wales might enable them to secure higher prices?—Yes.

6992. And that the securing higher prices would enable them to pay higher wages?—Yes.

6993. And you further say that you have endeavoured to induce them to meet you, but they have so far failed?—Yes.

6994. And the system therefore simply is maintained of each quarry owner settling with and meeting his own men?—Yes, as well as he can.

6995. Whilst you say that the quarry owners as a body have not recognised your association and met it or its representatives, have separate quarry owners met you, for instance, as the representative of the men?—Yes, we have had an interview with some of the small quarry proprietors when we tried this, and had letters from others saying that if we could succeed in getting the large proprietors to meet in a conference they would meet as well.

6996. What I meant to ask was this. If any question arises at a particular quarry between the manager and the men employed there, would you be admitted to take part in any discussion as spokesman for the men?—In some of them; in others I have been refused. In the case I referred to I was refused, though I tried.

6997. And where you are refused, what happens?—The men were on strike and we had a law suit, when I thought we might settle it amicably.

6998. Was that the case you referred to a few minutes ago?—Yes.

6999. Is there any other matter that you wish to submit to us?—We have a complaint as to some special rules in some of our quarries, and the men complain that they are overstringent, and that the punishment is unreasonable when they violate the rule.

7000. What do you desire to state upon that subject?—As I said before, the men who are working are paid monthly, and they require to get a month's notice as a rule; but we have instances of men being dismissed without any notice when violating some of these rules, which we consider are of no benefit either to the employer or the employed.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

7001. What is the general understanding in the industry in regard to the notice that a man must give before he can leave his employment?—It is a month. They work out their contract—work to the end of what they call the quarry month—the end of four weeks.

7002. He must give a month's notice except that he may leave without giving the month's notice if the bargain work that he has undertaken is completed?—If they do complete them before the end, generally they find them employment till the end of the month.

7003. Therefore may we take it that there is a recognised obligation on both sides to give a month's notice?—Yes.

7004. And your complaint is that men are dismissed without notice for a breach of certain rules which you think are harsh?—Yes.

7005. Do you desire to give us any illustration of the harshness of these rules?—There is a case that occurred 12 months ago, it may be, where certain men that were loaders in a quarry were required by the agent to get particular slates down the inclines from what they call the galleries. They could not do it, and nobody else could do it, and consequently since they could not do it, and they said they could not do it, they were instantly dismissed.

7006. I thought you rather desired to bring under our notice some of the rules that generally prevailed, and which you thought were harsh?—There are rules for the blasting out of time. If they do that they all admit that there ought to be some punishment inflicted; but the punishment inflicted is very often out of all proportion to the injury done. Then if a man is late, perhaps an hour in the morning, he is stopped for a week, sometimes a month. What the men say is that if the men were stopped for a half a day or a whole day the punishment would be more reasonable than the punishment that is inflicted.

7007. That you would give as an illustration of the harshness of certain rules which has created a feeling of uneasiness?—Yes.

7008. Is it a very exceptional thing or a very common thing if a man is late 10 minutes or half an hour to suspend him from the work for a week or a month?—It is not very general; it is rather exceptional.

7009. Have you known it to occur several times or only once?—It has occurred in the same quarry, I believe, more than once.

7010. Is there any other point you wish to bring under our notice?—I am afraid I should not be allowed to go into the question of leaseholders.

7011. No, I think that is not a question for this Commission?—Then I do not think I have anything else.

Mr. *Balfour.*

7012. Should you say that the relations between the employers and employed were, on the

Mr. *Balfour*—continued.

whole, good in your industry?—We have no disputes just now; but we cannot meet together to settle anything amicably. They will not meet us; that is the worst of it.

7013. What you desire to see is an organisation of the employers which would meet and discuss matters with your organisation?—Yes; and that we should have opportunity to consider questions that might arise between the employers and employed.

7014. And you have several times endeavoured to bring that about?—Yes.

7015. Without success?—Without success.

7016. What steps have you taken?—We have written to them resolutions, a copy of which I have here.

7017. Is the difficulty which arises a difficulty between the big quarry owners and the small quarry owners?—Yes.

7018. Do you know what the source of the difficulty is?—The belief is, seeing the list, that the large quarries are working in their own way, and they can work better than the smaller owners, because they are their own landlords. They have better advantage to work, because the quarries are on the sides of the mountains; there are no rents to pay, and they have better facilities for bringing their produce to the market, so that there is that difficulty. Some believe that they want to get control of the whole of the slate trade.

7019. Then your impression is that the big quarry owners think that they have such an economic advantage over the smaller ones that it would not answer their purpose to join in a federation with them?—I should think it would answer. They would get, say, 15 per cent. more for this produce.

7020. Is not that a consideration which must have occurred to them?—It is.

7021. Would you not expect that they would know their own business better than the men in their employment?—Yes, they ought to know it.

7022. But you think, as a matter of fact, they are making a mistake?—That is my belief.

7023. And you suggest, as a remedy for the existing state of things, that Parliament should interfere and provide a board of arbitration?—Yes.

7024. And I think further, in the second resolution which you read out, it was proposed that boards of arbitration should be established by Parliament for all industries?—I will put it in this way: that boards of arbitration should be optional; that the employer and employed should have power to appoint them. If they refuse or neglect, then I say let Parliament do it for them.

7025. Then is it your idea that there should be one board of arbitration to deal with many industries, or that there should be one for each industry?—That there should be one for each industry.

7026. And that these separate boards of arbitration should be appointed by Parliament?—If they will not do it themselves.

Mr. *Balfour*—continued.

7027. And your faith in arbitration is such that in your industry you would allow the board to settle prices?—Yes.

7028. Are you acquainted with any board of arbitration in the country which deals with questions of prices?—I cannot say that it is a board which deals with the sliding scale in coal mines.

7029. Sliding scales fix the relation of wages to prices, do they not?—Yes.

7030. They do not deal with the question of prices?—The wages depend upon the prices.

7031. The prices are determined by the employers, are they not?—As a rule they are.

7032. Is there any exception to that rule?—I cannot say.

7033. Now with regard to the eight hours' question, the men whom you represent view the progress of the eight hours' movement with favour?—Yes.

7034. But in answer to a question from the Chairman I think you said it was left undecided whether it was to be a legal eight hour day or an eight hour day arrived at by voluntary arrangement?—It has not been decided by the quarrymen; they have discussed it, but they did not decide that it should be legislated upon.

7035. How would an eight hour day answer in the quarrying trade?—In the summer it would reduce the working hours; but in the winter it would not.

7036. In the winter the working hours are seven?—Yes.

7037. And you could not increase those hours because there would not be sufficient light?—Yes.

7038. Therefore in winter you would continue to work 7 hours, and in the summer it would be reduced from 8½ or 9 to 8?—Yes, the total number.

7039. I think you also said that wages were considerably lower now than they were some time ago?—Yes.

7040. Therefore I take it that the quarrying industry cannot be in a very flourishing condition at the present time?—They are selling the slate, but we maintain that the prices are too low for the goods.

7041. Was the price higher at the previous period to which you refer?—Yes, is was higher, about 40 per cent.

Mr. *Burt.*

7042. In the views you have expressed as to State boards of arbitration, are you giving your own opinions or the opinions of the quarrymen, or both?—Of the quarrymen and myself.

7043. You are agreed on that point?—Yes.

7044. Then would they be in favour of compulsory enforcement of awards?—I should think so, if they failed otherwise.

7045. And how would that be carried out in case the employers refused or the workmen refused to accept the award?—That would be a difficulty. But, unquestionably, when there is an award in a case like that I maintain that the

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

majority of the men, to say the least, would take it, whether they thought it right or wrong, for a time.

7046. You are, I take it, strongly in favour of arbitration as the mode of settling disputes?—Yes; we have passed a resolution, and have drawn up a code of rules.

7047. And probably if the quarry owners had an association you would approach them with a view to establishing a voluntary board of arbitration?—Yes; we have tried once on an advance of wages at the beginning of this year.

7048. You mentioned that wages are now higher than they were some time ago, but that they have been rather higher than now?—Yes.

7049. I gather from a reply you just made to Mr. Balfour that the lowness of the wage does not arise from the depression of the trade; the quarrymen are fully employed, are they?—They are.

7050. There is a considerable demand for the slates?—Yes.

7051. What are the wages at the present time?—They vary from 3*s.* to 5*s.* But some are doing more on contracts and others less. They fluctuate very much.

7052. What were they when they were at their highest within your recollection?—They were about 7*s.* 6*d.* a day.

7053. Did that continue for long?—It continued from 1874 to 1878.

7054. Has the general improvement of trade had any effect on the quarrymen's wages, especially the increase of wages among the miners?—It has a little.

7055. To what extent?—It may be 4 or 5 per cent.

7056. I suppose this strike in 1885–6 was a very large strike; did it extend over many quarries?—Only one quarry.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

7057. A large one?—A large one, employing 2,700 men.

7058. Have you had recently any smaller strikes?—Only the one I refer to.

7059. With regard to inspection, you have not inspection of the open quarries, but you want the appointment of an inspector?—That is my personal opinion.

7060. Is there any strong feeling among the quarrymen in favour of the appointment of inspectors?—As I said before, they are divided when we took their votes on the matter, but we have not taken them lately, so that I cannot say how they are now exactly.

7061. Those quarries where drifting is carried on are inspected now?—Yes, by the inspector of mines.

7062. And is that inspection satisfactory?—Hardly.

7063. Does that arise from an insufficiency in the number of inspectors?—It is a question of knowledge of slate quarrying, I believe, more than anything else.

7064. The inspector of mines is a man who has had a training as a miner?—Yes.

7065. And has not had any experience in quarrying?—No.

7066. And that is the subject of complaint?—Yes.

7067. You mentioned that machinery had been introduced to some extent. Are the drilling machines the property of the quarrymen or of the owners of the quarry?—Very few are in the hands of the men.

7068. Do the quarrymen find their own tools apart from the drilling machines?—Yes.

7069. You have not any complaint, such as I believe prevails in some parts of the country, with regard to the owners having provided machines and charged men in some way for them?—No; it is only, as I explained before in reduction of poundage.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow morning.

FOURTEENTH DAY.

Commission Room, Westminster Hall, Wednesday, 9th December 1891.

PRESENT:

Mr. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

The Right Hon. H. H. FOWLER, M.P.
Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. W. ABRAHAM, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Sir WM. LEWIS.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.
Mr. E. TROW.
The Right Hon. A. J. MUNDELLA, M.P., Mr. M. AUSTIN, and Mr. J. MAWDSLEY (Group C.) and Mr. H. TAIT (Group B.), also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Joint Secretaries.

Mr. WILLIAM JOHN WILLIAMS re-called and further examined.

Sir *William Lewis.*

7070. Am I right in assuming that you have had practical experience as a quarryman yourself?—Yes.

7071. To what extent?—I worked in the slate quarries until I was 21 years of age.

7072. Until 21?—Yes.

7073. And at what time did you commence?—When I was 12.

7074. What process did you go through to acquire a knowledge of slate quarrying?—I went in with my father, and then I learned it both in and out.

7075. Was that in an open quarry or underground?—It was an open quarry—Lord Penrhyn's.

7076. Then would you mind telling us what changes were made in your occupation from time to time as you acquired more knowledge?—I was taken to begin to work small slates, and assisted by my father.

7077. Was your father a quarryman or was he a splitter?—My father was a quarryman all round, and my grandfather too.

7078. Then what did you do next?—Then I went to work by the day with bargain takers, and then I went to work on my own account.

7079. And since the age of 21 you have had nothing to do with it?—No, not directly.

7080. Have you ever worked underground in slate quarries?—No, never.

7081. So that your experience is entirely confined to open quarries?—Yes.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

7082. Since 21 have you had anything to do with the business matters in connexion with the disposal of slates?—Not much.

7083 So that your evidence upon that particular matter is what you have been told or what you have seen in the newspapers?—By investigating as secretary of the quarrymen's union.

7084. Do you mean as to the doings of the quarry owners in the disposal of their produce?—Yes, as much as we could get at, but we did not get the information that we should like to have. We feel that we are not getting what we ought to have from the Government returns. I did not say this yesterday, but I should like just to mention it now, as you asked me that question. The account of our slate quarries in the Government returns is very incomplete, more so than any other trade in the kingdom. Every quarry owner ought to supply full particulars for publication of men and boys employed, tons of slates and slabs manufactured, tons of slates and slabs sold, and price. These particulars should be supplied and published opposite the name of each quarry. That is a thing that we do not get.

7085. So you think that the workmen should be informed through Government returns as to the particulars which you have just indicated?—Yes.

7086. Now, with respect to quarrying in general, is there anything more than ordinary labourers' work about it?—Yes.

7087. In what way?—No one can split and throw out the slate rock unless they are accustomed to it when they are young.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

7088. Do you mean to say that there are not a number of men who go into the quarries after they have grown up, and acquire the art, if you will allow me to use such a term, of quarrying?—Yes, they never learn; they do not know how to handle the tools. I would tell you at once, if you would come with me, the difference between a practical man and a man who had gone in after growing up, by seeing him only handle the tools, without seeing him doing anything.

7089. How long do you suggest to the Committee it would require for a man to acquire the art of quarrying?—I should say from five to six years.

7090. Is there anything more in quarrying slate with respect to the blasting than there is in quarrying stone, apart from the question of the cleavage of the rock?—Yes, you may make it worthless by blasting it, unless you understand how to blast.

7091. But, apart from the cleavage, if you will observe my question—the blasting and the mode of blasting depends upon the cleavage of the rock?—Yes, it does.

7092. Does it take a very long time to know anything about that?—Yes.

7093. Now, with respect to the management of quarries, what class of men as a rule manage quarries?—The practical men, as a rule; but the head managers are men that do not understand it at all in most of the quarries.

7094. But the men who are in contact with the quarrymen are practical men who have been promoted from time to time after considerable experience in the quarries?—Generally they are, but those that are above them do not understand the language of the quarrymen; and then they cannot give orders except through a medium; and then the men do not know exactly what passes when they have the agent as a medium to communicate between them and the head manager.

7095. Then, is your complaint more against the particular men of your own class who have been promoted after they have had experience of your work, or is it against men who are superior to the practical managers?—Those who are superior.

7096. Is it not the fact that it is the practical managers who arrange the operations carried on from day to day at the quarries?—They do that, but the general control of the quarry is in the hands of the head manager, and we have instances of head managers coming there with a capital, and then they spend that improperly, and spend it in machinery and other things, instead of in proper development.

7097. But is not the expenditure controlled by the practical managers who, you say, have been promoted from the ranks of the workingmen?—I cannot say; a practical man would not do it as some do it; I say that; I would not do it.

7098. That is to say, you differ from some of these practical men?—Well, I do.

7099. And some of these practical men may have had twice or three times your experience?—Well, they might, but there is a question who is managing it.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

7100. Now, with respect to the prices paid to the men, is that not a matter of competition and bargain work from time to time?— Yes.

7101. The men tender to do certain work for certain prices?—Yes.

7102. Other men tender higher or lower, and then the manager selects what he conceives to be the most advantageous tender?—No, they do not do that.

7103. Not from your point of view?—No, they do not do it, not from my point of view; they do not do it.

7104. What do they do, then?—What they do is, they come round and they try to arrange, and the end of it, if they do not agree, is, that the manager will say, "I will give you so much; take it, or leave it alone."

7105. That manager, having passed through practically the same process, and knowing the value of the work?—Supposed to do so.

7106. Now do you suggest that arbitration would be applicable to settling matters of that kind from day to day in all the quarries in North Wales?—Yes, it has been used for many years. From 1874 to 1880 they used to have what they called a quarry committee. Then the men, when they thought they were not properly dealt with, submitted their case to experienced men; then they considered whether they had a proper complaint or not, and then, if they thought they had, they would submit it to the manager, and together they would agree. This worked very well during the time when it was used.

7107. Was that not abandoned in consequence of the enormous number of claims that were made under that arrangement, which never had been made previously?—No.

7108. Have you any statistics now that would enable the Committee to judge as to the number of disputes that arose when an arrangement of that kind was in existence, compared with the period when the settlements were entirely between the practical manager and the respective workmen?—It was not a settlement, it was a case of giving in entirely then.

7109. It was a case of competition between a certain number of men for certain work?—Only two or three were partners, and then it was a case between those two or three, and the manager only.

7110. Yes; but you have not answered my question. Can you tell the Committee what number of cases were dealt with subsequent to the arrangement of a quarry committee compared with what existed previously?—No, because if I had kept a record of those, during the time of the existence of that committee, nobody would know of the cases previously, except the two or three, and the manager.

7111. Are you able to say that the operations were carried on with less dispute under that

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

arrangement than they were previously?—Yes.

7112. That is your experience, is it?—Yes, and I believe it would be so in the future too.

7113. I do not think you told us, in the event of a decision being given against the men, how you propose it should be enforced. I will assume first of all that the man is not in any union?—Yes, what I said yesterday, I believe, was, that I think that the majority of the men would submit for a time, whether they agreed to the decision or not. I believe that was my answer to the Chairman yesterday.

7114. Are you speaking now for your union, or for non-unionists?—I speak for the whole, so far as I know them.

7115. Yes; but I do not understand you to appear here, except for about half the quarrymen?—In one sense I do for more.

7116. In what sense?—I will explain to you. I said yesterday—and I read the resolution, I believe—that we had a general conference last December of all quarrymen, and invited a representative for each 100 workmen in every quarry in North Wales. In that conference we were favourable to boards of arbitration, and it had nothing to do with the union, except the calling of the meeting.

7117. To what extent were the whole of the quarries represented at that gathering?—They were very well represented.

7118. Will you tell us the percentage; were there more than half?—There were more than three-fourths, I believe, though I have not the figures, but I have them at home, and from what quarry every one came. I should say there were five-sixths of them, if not more.

7119. Did you take the trouble to ascertain the proportion of unionists and non-unionists which were represented at that gathering?—Well, if I put it on the figures I submitted yesterday, I must say there were about 10,000 men altogether represented, and of those there were about 6,000 unionists and 4,000 non-unionists.

7120. Now, will you assume that a number of workmen who are affected by an award of an arbitrator decline to accept it—assume that, if you please, for the moment—how would you suggest that the award should be enforced against such a number of men?—The only way we could do it would be to ask all those that would submit to it to go to work, and let the others take their chance.

7121. Suppose that was a very small proportion, is the quarry to be carried on for the benefit of these particular people, and are the other men who do not accept the award to stand out, the quarry being practically boycotted; is that so?—I believe this, that it would not be so.

7122. I am asking you to assume that occasionally there is an unreasonable workman—it is an extravagant thing to assume, possibly?—Yes, that is my impression of the matter, that it is rather extravagant from my knowledge of our men.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

7123. Have you ever known any quarry boycotted in case of a dispute about prices between the owners and the workmen?—I am not aware.

7124. Never?—I am not aware.

7125. Would you tell us what number of quarries there are at work in North Wales at present?—I do not think I can accurately.

7126. Perhaps you could tell us whether there have not been a large number of quarries closed during late years?—There are a number closed.

7127. Do you think that has at all affected the price which owners have been able to obtain for their produce?—It might to a certain extent.

7128. Have you taken the trouble to inquire as to the cause of the falling off in the produce of slates or the demand for slates?—Many years ago the cause was that they advanced the prices, too high it might be.

7129. And even now, when the prices are lower, the quantity of slates they are able to sell is much less than formerly?—They are getting back again into the market by degrees.

7130. Have you never inquired as to the cause, now; have you ever heard of such a thing as galvanized iron taking the place of slates?—Yes, and of tiles and American slates too.

7131. I suppose you are aware that corrugated iron has taken the place of slates very largely in consequence of the higher price that ruled in North Wales for a period of years?—Yes, it did then, but it will not last instead of slates.

7132. But, at all events, of late years a number of quarries have been obliged to be closed after a large expenditure of capital?—Yes. I thought of tendering some reason for that yesterday, but I was prevented.

7133. Would you mind telling us whether you inquired whether the increased cost of working those quarries had not something to do with the closing of them?—It might, and the low prices of slates.

7134. And had it not something to do with them that they were getting under too much cover, and that they were driven to work them underground instead of in the open?—Not in Carnarvonshire.

7135. I am asking you for North Wales?—I cannot say positively; there is a friend here who can answer that question.

7136. Then you do not know that of your own knowledge?—I cannot say that from my own knowledge.

7137. Do you not think that the owners and managers have sufficient inducement to do the best with their produce without, as you suggested, throwing it away and granting more and more percentages to get rid of it?—They are in a competition, and in that competition they have no kind of exchange of ideas on prices amongst themselves, as far as I understand. The owners of small quarries have been saying to me, personally, that if they could get a better understanding they might advance from 15 to

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

20 per cent. on them, and on that supposition I worked my calculations which I gave yesterday, and said that it is a loss to the two counties of 150,000*l.*; and I was going further, allowing half of that to the quarry proprietors, and taking the other half for the men when I said they were suffering 2*s.* 6*d.* per week for each workman in all the slate quarries in North Wales.

7138. You think then, that notwithstanding the very large expenditure which has been incurred at various quarries, and the low prices they are now selling at, they are utterly indifferent, and that they therefore do not adopt what you say they ought to adopt with a view of increasing the returns upon the capital they have expended?—They are not indifferent.

7139. Who?—The small owners are not indifferent; they are very anxious to do what I suggested, if they could get the large owners to join them.

7140. What proportion of the produce is worked at the quarries of the large owners?—I dare say there might be from two-thirds to three-fourths.

7141. Three-fourths would be nearer the mark, would it not?—It may be somewhere there.

7142. And you suggest that they have no inducement to do the best they can with the produce?—They have; the more profits they would get.

7143. I beg your pardon?—The more profit they ought to get.

7144. Do you say there are 150,000*l.* a year lost to North Wales by reason of the owners not doing their best to obtain better prices in the slate market?—Yes, by not having a better understanding in order to get the better prices—I do say that.

7145. Applying it to slates or anything else is not the fact of their under-selling each other a pretty good indication that the supply is in excess of the demand?—No, since the slates are going; what they say is that they would not sell a slate less if they were to advance from 15 to 20 per cent.

7146. That is what you say?—No, what the managers say to me. I am not saying my own opinion upon that. I have been making inquiries.

7147. In that case it comes back to this: that the managers say that they keep down the prices while they could obtain better prices, and do you suggest that that is done in order to keep down the wages?—No, it is done in order, I believe, to close the small quarries.

7148. With respect to your complaint as to the mode in which men were treated in the event of their putting shot-holes off at improper times, is not that a very dangerous operation if done at a time when the men have not been removed; and in the hands of a careless and negligent person, might it not result in great loss of life?—Yes, and the rules they have in existence in some quarries are dangerous to the men who are working there too.

7149. But the fact of the shot-holes being put off at improper times might result in great loss of life to the quarrymen?—Yes, I said so yesterday. Reasonable rules no man would complain against.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

Mr. *Mawdsley.*

7150. Did I rightly understand you to say that the average age of the men working in these quarries was about 30?—Yes.

7151. What is the cause of their getting out of the work so early?—The work is rather unhealthy.

7152. What is the special cause of its being unhealthy?—It is the damp and coldness. Some of the quarries are very high on the mountains, too.

7153. What do they do when they come from working the quarries; how do they get their livelihood?—Some of them get so much from benefit clubs, and a few, who work in the large quarries till they get very old, get a pension. In some quarries they will get about 5*s.* a week, and in others they will get 7*s.* 6*d.* a week.

7154. If the average age is about 30, the number of men who work long enough to obtain these pensions would be very small?—Very small they are.

7155. So that the great bulk of them would have to leave before they qualify for the pension, would they not?—Yes, they have; and my belief is, that a man, if he has worked till he is up to 60, is not fit to go into the rocks afterwards. He is getting stiff, and he is not nimble enough to go into the rocks, that is my belief.

7156. Are the quarrymen given to thrifty habits; do they save money?—Yes, most of them.

7157. Do they generally set up in any kind of business after they have left the work?—No, but some do.

7158. Is the male population almost exclusively composed of quarrymen in the districts you represent?—Yes, but, of course, their surroundings are farmers.

7159. There will be a very large proportion of men walking about, who have been quarrymen, will there not?—No, not many. There is what I said about the ages checking them.

7160. What I cannot comprehend is, that if the average of age does not exceed 30 in the quarries——?—I did not say that; the average of death of quarrymen I meant. The average of the men does not exceed 30 years of age, taking the average men working in the quarries. Suppose that there are 100 men working in the slate quarries, the average age of those would not be over 30.

7161. That is exactly what I took you to mean. So that that means there must be a large number of men walking about if they do not go to some other occupation?—They do not, because they die young.

7162. They die young, do they?—Yes.

7163. Is it more unhealthy than most other occupations?—My impression is that; and it is

Mr. *Mawdsley*—continued.

generally believed too, but I cannot give you statistics to prove it.

7164. And still you do not say, as I understand you, that the average age of the men actually working at these quarries does not exceed 30. That is a very young age, of course?—Yes.

7165. In that case the men who have got up towards 40 must have ceased working in the quarries?—There are a proportion above.

7166. Exactly, but if the average is 30, that means that there are a good many below 30, whilst there are perhaps some above?—Yes.

7167. And when it gets up towards 40 the number of men beyond 40 must be very scarce?—Yes, from 40 to 60.

7168. These men must be somewhere; do you see them walking about the streets or the lanes?—No.

7169. You have no idea where they get to?—No, they go to the quarries. They are on these benefit-clubs, most of them, but the number is decreasing very materially.

Sir *William Lewis.*

7170. Do you suggest that they get payment from their benefit clubs at the same time that they go to the quarries and follow their occupation?—No.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

7171. You said that at this moment. I do not know whether you understood the question?—No, I said that those who were unable to work are maintained by a benefit out of the benefit clubs, and from these pension schemes—not when they are working.

7172. Are they maintained out of a benefit club, except in case of sickness or suffering or accident?—There are some, but then they are rheumatic—then they are suffering and they cannot go on following their occupations.

7173. They are suffering from what you would call sickness?—Yes.

Chairman.

7174. I do not know that it is of very great importance, but as some time has been spent on this question about the average of 30 years, we had better understand clearly what you mean; in your proof you say "the average age of "quarrymen is lower than of most workmen. I "am given to understand it is about 30 years." I think what the Commission understood was this: that if every man and boy now working in these North Wales quarries was to make a return of his present age, the aggregate of the figures so sent in, added up and divided by the total number of persons, would give an average of 30; is that what you mean?—Yes.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. DAVID GRIFFITH WILLIAMS called and examined in Welsh.

7174*a*. Sir *William Lewis* interpreted his evidence as follows:—

"I have asked him does he concur in the views expressed by Mr. W. J. Williams, so far as he has discussed them previously, and so far as they are rendered in the answers to the questions issued by the Commission, and his reply is 'yes.' As to whether he desires to add anything to the information afforded to the Commission in answer to these questions, he says nothing more than that as to the time worked every day he differs from Mr. W. J. Williams. There is a difference in the time worked in Merionethshire as compared with the time worked in Carnarvonshire. In Festiniog they work 10 hours per day, and 9½ hours in Carnarvonshire; that is only in the summer. It varies in the winter, depending on the length of the day. He is 55 years of age, and he says he has been for 42 years at work in the quarries. He is pretty healthy altogether. He worked under the old *régime*, which has since been changed. He worked under the old *régime* for 20 years. Things have improved in one sense since then; but they are not as good for the workmen in others. The introduction of machinery has, he believes, not improved the health of the workmen. Then a larger quantity of slates are worked underground, which he thinks is not so healthy as working out in the open. There is an abundance of ventilation passing through the mine—too much in many places. In the winter it is better working underground, except for the smoke from the blasting. That is all he has to object to as regards the working underground. He says that he is the president of the association of which Mr. W. J. Williams is the secretary, and that they have agreed upon all matters previous to filling up the answers to these questions."

(Mr. *W. J. Williams.*) If you will allow me there is a word more to be said as to that. It is not the opinion of two of us, but the opinion of a committee selected to reply to the questions.

Sir *William Lewis.*

Very well, I adopt that.

In reply to further questions Mr. D. G. Williams says he considers that Mr. W. J. Williams has expressed the general wishes of the workmen. One of the special objects they have is to form a board of arbitration. I have asked him whether he has anything else to say, and he says he has nothing further to express.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. JOHN PUXLEY WHITE called and examined.

Chairman.

7175. You reside at the "Scotlands," Coalville, near Leicester, I believe?—Yes.

7176. You are the chairman and managing director of the South Leicestershire Colliery Company, Limited?—Yes.

7177. And you have occupied those positions since the formation of the company, 17 years ago?—Yes.

7178. Are you also agent to the Snibstone Colliery Company, Coalville, near Leicester, and have you been connected with that company for a period of 39 years?—I have.

7179. Does the South Leicestershire Company work both the South Leicestershire and the Snibstone Pits, and employ in their collieries, pit banks, brickyard, and workshops about 1,100 men and boys?—They do.

7180. Have you been for some years a member of the Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Leicestershire Colliery Owners' Association, and are you one of the executive committee of that association?—Yes.

7181. And also a member of the council of the Mining Association of Great Britain?—Yes.

7182. Have you been appointed by colliery owners in the association just described to give evidence before this Commission?—I have.

7183. I notice that the Warwickshire coalfield is also introduced into the description of the districts which you represent?—Yes, that is so.

7184. Is Warwickshire in the Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Leicestershire Colliery Owners' Association?—No, it is not. I am not representing the association here to-day, I am representing the South Derbyshire, Warwickshire, and Leicestershire coalowners—not the association. I am appointed by the colliery owners.

7185. You do not come as the official representative of the Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Leicestershire Colliery Owners' Association?—No, I do not.

7186. But as the representative of the coalowners of South Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Warwickshire?—That is so.

7187. They have not a corporate existence in that capacity?—No.

7188. In those three districts, namely, South Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Warwickshire, how many persons are employed in coal getting?—A little over 13,000.

7189. What quantity of coal was raised in those three districts in the year 1890?—Roundly, about 4,000,000 tons.

7190. Do you also desire, although not specially appointed by the Colliery Owners' Association to be here, to state as a member of that association what its constitution is?—Yes, I do.

7191. With what questions does that Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Leicestershire Colliery Owners' Association deal?—It does not deal with wages, but allows discussions on wages. Its capital is not allowed to be used

Chairman—continued.

with reference to the question of wages. It is an association for dealing with parliamentary and other such matters, but not for dealing with wages, that is to say, it takes no part in wages questions.

7192. In what manner, then, are wages questions dealt with?—They are dealt with by local associations, and if the question is one of very great importance, the colliery owners meet in London and arrange a meeting with the men. That was so on the last occasion, when the 10 per cent. was asked for.

7193. Are the general wages questions of these three districts, as distinguished from local wages questions, regulated by the coalowners of those districts, acting independently of South Yorkshire, we will say?—Yes, entirely so, unless they meet in London, and it is a very important question, then other colliery owners will join them.

7194. What are the daily earnings at the present time of the hewers, stallmen as you call them, in the district you represent?—They vary from 7*s.* to 10*s.* per day to stallmen.

7195. Is there any sliding scale?—No, there is not.

7196. Is there some system of sub-contracting?—Yes, they sub-contract, but at the same time the men who sub-contract are considered to be servants of the company. They have to sign our books, and conform to our rules.

7197. Will you just describe what is the character of the sub-contracting?—We pay the stallman so much a ton, and he in his turn employs fillers and loaders.

7198. About how many persons would be serving the stallman?—Six or seven.

7199. And there is no more important system of sub-contracting than that?—None whatever.

7200. So that of a gang of six or seven men the principal one would be recognised, and would receive the piece-work rate agreed upon, and he would pay his assistants?—There are sometimes two stallmen, and they employ the other men in the stall.

7201. What are the ordinary hours of labour?—They vary from eight and a half to nine hours in our particular colliery. We have an eight hours turning for five days a week, the collieries being open nine hours, and the men having half an hour for what is called snap.

7202. Will you describe a little more exactly the hour of the day at which the men begin to descend the pit?—That varies according to the season of the year, sometimes it is at six, sometimes it is at half-past six; if they begin at six they leave off half an hour earlier in the afternoon.

7203. We will suppose that they begin to go down at six?—They leave off at 10 for snap; they resume half an hour afterwards, and leave off at three.

7204. That is, the hours are from six to three?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

7205. They begin to descend at six?—Yes.

7206. And they begin to ride up the shaft at three?—Yes.

7207. They have had half an hour's suspension?—Yes, for snap.

7208. About how many days a week are the pits worked?—In the winter time we generally work five days a week.

7209. In summer?—In summer from three to four.

7210. Are most of the men employed in the three districts you represent members of a union?—Yes, nearly all of them.

7211. Nearly all of them?—There are very few exceptions.

7212. What is that union called?—In Leicestershire it is called the Leicestershire Miners' Union, in Derbyshire the Derbyshire Miners' Union, and in Warwickshire the Warwickshire Miners' Union.

7213. Is there any distinction made by the colliery proprietors in their treatment of union and non-union men?—None whatever.

7214. When was the last strike of any importance?—In 1876.

7215. In what district?—In Leicestershire particularly.

7216. And how long did it last?—14 weeks.

7217. What was the cause of dispute?—It was an application on the part of the men for an addition of 2*d.* per ton.

7218. And what was the result; in what manner was the strike brought to a conclusion, and upon what terms?—After being out 14 weeks the mayor of Leicester, Mr. Bennett, came to see the men, and after talking to them he persuaded them to accept a 1*d.* per ton, which the employers granted.

7219. The employers conceded half the claim of the men?—Yes.

7220. Had you at one time a sliding scale in Leicestershire?—Yes, it was attempted to be made into a sliding scale, but it was never thoroughly settled.

7221. Do you mean it never was brought into operation?—It was brought into operation as a sort of trial, but it was never carried out, simply because we could not bind the men in any way to abide by the decision of the umpire.

7222. Perhaps you will tell us a little more exactly what happened?—It was commenced, I believe, at one colliery only many years ago, on a certain basis, as a trial, and as long as the prices went up, and they got an increase, they were perfectly satisfied with it. When the prices began to recede they then thought the sliding scale was not the best thing for them.

7223. But for what period did the sliding scale actually govern wages?—For only about six months.

7224. Then it came into operation, according to your description, when prices were rising, and they very soon began to fall, is that so?—Yes; it was just before 1876. After the inflation of the years 1873 and 1874, prices began to recede, and it was thought a good time to try it; but when the prices went down and they talked about reducing the wages, they did not agree to it at all. It was never really thoroughly carried out; it was a trial in my own district, not in South Derbyshire and Warwickshire.

Chairman—continued.

7225. Were the wages based upon the actually realized prices of an antecedent period?—Yes.

7226. That is to say, the prices realized by the coal owners over a certain number of months having been ascertained, they governed wages for a certain period ahead?—Yes.

7227. But would not the effect of that in a falling market, have been that the men's wages would not have been lowered so quickly as if they had responded to the changed market prices?—There was a very great reduction in 1876; the reductions came very rapidly, and after the very high prices of 1873 and 1874, it made a great difference, naturally.

7228. Of course you will see that if wages were to fall by arrangement or by agreement with the actually falling market price of the day, the influence of a sliding scale which was based upon prior prices would be rather to retard the reduction?—Yes, but that did not retard our reduction; it was an arrangement that according to the average selling prices the wages should go down with the prices.

7229. Do you mean the average selling price from day to day?—From month to month.

7230. Then was it abandoned by mutual consent, or was it terminated by the men?—It terminated by mutual consent. They were not satisfied with what we were willing to give them, and we had it terminated.

7231. Was the Miners' Union at that time strong?—No, very weak indeed, there was no union, in fact, of any importance.

7232. Do you think, had it been otherwise, that that agreement might have been maintained?—I think so.

7233. Have you made any attempt since to establish a sliding scale?—No, none.

7234. In the regulation of wages since, have you managed to avoid a strike?—There have been two or three days' strikes, but nothing of any importance.

7235. That is nothing of any importance since 1876?—Nothing whatever.

7236. Does the settlement of local questions affecting particular collieries give rise to any strikes or suspensions of work?—No. We make it a district question, if it is a question of the hewing rate or a question of the shifters' wages and then, when it is made a district question the whole of the colliery owners meet together and confer. We have had several interviews with the different men of the different collieries—two or three representing a colliery for instance—and have always settled it amicably in that way without any strike of importance.

7237. But there do arise purely local questions at local collieries, do there not?—Yes, but they are nothing very important; we have had nothing since 1876.

7238. You desire, I think, to express some opinion in regard to the establishment of a board of arbitration or of conciliation?—Yes.

Chairman—continued.

have taken to wearing badges on their caps just lately, and there is a little bit of jealousy shown on the part of those who wear the badges against those who have not got the badges; they do not like them if they have not got badges on their caps.

7264. Does that find expression in any refusal to work together, or to descend the shaft together?—Not in our case, but it has in South Derbyshire extended to that.

7265. Has there been a threat that unless the non-union workmen were discharged the union men would not work?—In South Derbyshire that is so.

7266. It has not gone beyond the threat?—No; it has not gone beyond the threat.

7267. You have given, I believe, some consideration to the question of Parliament being asked to limit the hours of adult labour to eight hours from bank to bank?—Yes.

7268. Perhaps rather more with reference to underground workmen; what is your view on that subject?—I think it would be a very great mistake.

7269. Would you give some reason for that view?—The reason for that view is that they very rarely in our district work more than eight hours to-day, but if you have Parliament interfering with adults the time may come when they may order them to work 10 or 11 hours. I do not see why we should not legislate for one the same as the other.

7270. You say they do not work more than eight hours, but, of course, the question is the number of hours below ground?—Yes.

7271. They are now nine hours below ground?—Yes, nine hours for five days a week; less than that on the sixth day.

7272. Then the question put to you rather is what would be the effect, do you think, upon your trade of all classes of men being limited to eight hours below ground?—In the coal trade generally throughout this district it would reduce the output very considerably in some cases; it depends very much upon how far the face of the coal is from the shaft bottom.

7273. Would you desire to say anything more fully upon that subject as set forth in your proof?—I should say that in the collieries represented by me on this occasion the average number of working days throughout the year is about 220; I have gone very carefully through it, and I find that that is the average.

7274. That is days on which work is offered?—On which work really takes place; that is the average number of working days throughout the last two years—220 days per year, and that is 8½ hours working time per day.

Sir *William Lewis.*

7275. Average days worked?—Average days worked.

Chairman.

7276. Per man?—Per man in the whole of the collieries; it is taken from that.

Chairman—continued.

7277. Do you mean that the collieries in your district have been opened 220 days in the year?—Yes, for 8½ hours working time.

7278. The remaining 145 days of the year have either been Sundays or Saturdays, or possibly holidays?—Or holidays.

7279. The pits have not been at work, in fact, more than 220 days?—Yes, that is 8½ hours working time.

7280. The 8½ hours working time is arrived at by deducting from the nine hours the half an hour for snap?—Yes. If you reduce it to eight hours, bank to bank, that would represent from 6 to 6½ hours in some of the collieries to be worked, instead of eight hours, and if you bring down the average days to the same number, it leaves 220½ hours short to be worked in the future.

7281. Might you not work more days in that event?—I do not think so.

7282. Why?—Because I do not think that the output would be any different to what it is now very materially. You might work more days in the week; you might work the Saturday, if that is what you mean.

7283. Yes?—But then that would entail doing the necessary repairs on the Sunday, which we do not like. We never work on Saturdays ourselves; I do not think we have worked one Saturday in the last two years.

7284. I think, perhaps, you might say a little more on that subject; you say that during the 365 days in the year you have offered work on 220?—Yes.

7285. And you say that other 104 represent the Sundays and Saturdays?—Yes.

7286. That would be 324?—Yes.

7287. There still remain 41 days?—Yes.

7288. Well?—They generally take nearly a whole week at the wake time; that will have some influence on it; then there is Christmas time and Whitsuntide—the colliers are very fond of holidays.

7289. But still it is a question whether, if the working day was shortened, the number of working days in the year might not be increased?—They might be increased, certainly, I think.

7290. Do you wish to say anything more on that subject?—No, I think not.

7291. Have you any suggestion to offer as to what you think might tend to meet the desire of the men for shorter hours below ground, and yet not bring with it these difficulties?—There is a general opinion in Leicestershire, South Derbyshire, and Warwickshire that eight hours' coal drawing, actual coal turning, not eight hours' work bank to bank, would be satisfactory.

7292. Over how many hours does coal drawing now extend?—8½ hours in a day of nine hours. We work nine hours; the coal drawing extends to 8½ hours, and, I say, if we could actually work eight hours coal drawing per day it would be satisfactory to coalowners, that is, for every day they can find work for the men.

Chairman—continued.

7293. That, in fact, would be to reduce the present coal drawing hours by half an hour per day?—That is so.

7294. Do you think it might be done?—I think so.

7295. Do you mean that that would be an improvement upon the present system?—No; I think the present system is very satisfactory, but the men do not appear to agree with me about that.

7296. You have, I see, attached to your proof some rules of the Midland District Miners' Fatal Accident Relief Society, and the report of the actuary, and the statement of accounts?—Yes.

7297. I do not know how far you think it important to bring that under consideration?—I do not think it is very important except that I should like to see miners in our district insure rather more freely than they do in a Society of that sort. I happened to be a member of a board of guardians. I had a case come before me a few months ago where a poor man was killed, and his widow and five children were left penniless. If he had insured in this Society, or in another similar Society, the payment of 1*d.* a week would have given his widow 17*s.* 6*d.* in that case per week.

7298. Perhaps, without going too much into the detail of the constitution of this Midland District Miners' Fatal Accident Relief Society, it may be sufficient if I ask you whether there exists such a Society in the colliery district with which you are connected?—Yes.

7299. And do the owners contribute to it?—Yes, 12½ per cent., as a rule, upon the men's contributions.

7300. Do they make it a condition of their so contributing that the men shall contract out of the Employers' Liability Act?—No, it has nothing whatever to do with the Employers' Liability.

7301. You believe that the assistance rendered by this Relief Society is a valuable one, and you wish that the men would become members more generally?—I know it to be extremely beneficial.

7302. Have you any idea what proportion of the men are members?—A very small proportion in our district.

7303. When was it established?—About eight or nine years ago, I think.

7304. Are steps taken to bring its advantages home to the men, and to induce them to become members?—The secretary of the association and I myself have addressed meetings in the district, and done all we can to induce them to join it.

7305. Why do you think there is any indifference on the subject; I mean, to what do you attribute the indifference?—I really do not know what to attribute it to. I have not the slightest idea why they should object to pay a penny a week, but they do, although it is only a penny.

7306. Supplemented, as you say, in all cases by an owner's contribution of 12½ per cent. on the men's contributions?—That is so. There is a list of subscriptions in addition to the 12½ per cent., I may say. The Duke of Devonshire gives something like 30*l.* a year. You will see the subscriptions on the annual statement of accounts, that shows the honorary contributions at the back.

7307. In addition to these contributions of the coal-owners there are subscriptions to the extent of 206*l.* for the year 1890, headed by the Duke of Devonshire, 30*l.*, the Duke of Portland, 30*l.*, and so on?—Yes.

7308. Is there any other point on which you desire to offer evidence, prior to being examined by the members of the Commission?—No, I think not.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

7309. You desire to see a board of arbitration or conciliation established in your district?—Yes.

7310. I suppose by that, you mean that you desire to see a voluntary arrangement between the masters and the men?—To a certain extent; but I should like the umpire to be appointed by some Government official.

7311. You would not desire to see a board of arbitration imposed upon the district by Parliament?—No. My suggestion is, that there should be one man for every 100,000 tons of coal raised—one master, one man.

7312. Has any attempt been made at any time in the district to establish such a board as you suggest?—Not that I am aware of.

7313. No steps have been taken?—The plan we go upon now is to have a few men from each pit if there is a local difficulty, and they meet the masters, and we discuss it with them, the Miners' Union man being present. We have always been able to settle it, up to now, by making concessions, but I think the time may come when we shall want something further than that, and, therefore, I should suggest that an umpire be appointed to settle, in case we could not agree.

7314. Do you think the existence of such a board of arbitration would make it more easy to establish a sliding-scale?—That is a difficult question to answer. The sliding-scale is a very good basis to go upon if you can only start fairly, and hold them to their arrangement.

7315. You, yourself, would be in favour of the principle of a sliding-scale?—Certainly; I do not object to it on principle.

7316. It was once tried, I understood you to say?—Yes.

7317. But the experiment collapsed very rapidly?—Very rapidly.

7318. And that was, to some extent, in consequence of the fact that there was at the time no Union in the district?—There was a Union, but it was in a very weak condition, and they had no funds whatever to go on with.

7319. The Union is now much stronger?—Very much.

7320. That would make it more possible, I suppose, to re-introduce the sliding-scale system with some prospect of success?—I am afraid that there would be very considerable difficulty in our district with a sliding-scale, because the

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

qualities of the coal differ so very much. It would necessitate almost a sliding-scale for each pit. The quality of the coal is very different in our district.

7321. How do you arrange with regard to wages in the different pits at present?—The wages are arranged according to the tons hewn; the hewers' wages are paid according to the tons hewn.

7322. Where would the special difficulty of a sliding-scale come in in consequence of the varieties of the coal?—I am speaking of a district sliding-scale; there would have to be a different basis of wages for almost every colliery in our district.

7323. Could not the provisions of a sliding-scale applied to the district generally be varied by a board of arbitration in such a way as to suit the peculiarities of each pit?—Yes, that could be done.

7324. Had not that been already done in districts where a sliding scale does exist, or in districts where a sliding scale has in the past been worked with success?—I really do not know; I have had no experience of a sliding scale, except in the one case I have referred to.

7325. Wages are paid in your district under a system of sub-contracting, are they not?—A portion of them.

7326. A large portion of them?—No, not a large portion; it is only those people who are connected with the coal getting in the stalls. We pay the hewer a tonnage rate, and he settles with his own men what he pays them.

7327. The coal getters generally are paid, then, under a system of sub-contract?—They are paid by the ton, and they sub-contract for the holing, filling, and otherwise.

7328. Is that system generally satisfactory to the men?—It is very satisfactory to the stallmen. We tried to do away with it some time ago, but we found we should have a strike over it, and therefore we had to give way over the question.

7329. Therefore, I presume it is a system which does commend itself to the men?—Yes, to the stallmen.

7330. That is to say, to the hewers?—That is it.

7331. Now, with regard to the hours of work, you object to the interference of Parliament—?—Certainly I do, in adult labour.

7332. —in a matter of that kind?—With regard to adults.

7333. But you would not object to an arrangement by which the present 8½ hours of work should be changed to an eight hours' day?—Personally, I should not.

7334. An eight hours' day for coal drawing?—For coal drawing including snap; they must get their snap as best they can in that case.

7335. At present, half an hour is set apart for snap?—Yes.

7336. And if this change which you suggest was made, then the men would have to get their snap as best they could?—Yes, they do in other districts.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

7337. Now, the Chairman asked you whether it would not be possible, supposing an eight hours' day were worked, to make up for the loss of time by working an increased number of days in the pit?—Yes. That may be answered in this way, that if you work less coal in a day's turn, and you have plenty of orders, it would necessitate your working an additional day in the week, but it is not always that you have got the orders to turn sufficient for another day.

7338. I do not quite follow that last reply; do you mean that if there was to be any increase in the days you would have to increase the work one day in each week?—Yes, that is so.

7339. And that that might not exactly correspond to the increase of orders?—It would increase the cost to the owner if he had not a full day's turn. If we turn a half-day or a quarter-day it is much more expensive than turning a whole day.

7340. If, for instance, you were to work five days a week in the winter, as you do now, and in addition to that, half-a-day on Saturday, it would increase the cost to the owners considerably?—Yes.

7341. And similarly in the summer, when you now work three to four days, if you were to work four days regularly instead of three it also would increase the cost?—Yes, if in four days we put out as much as we now put out in three, of course it would.

7342. You mentioned that the average wages of stallmen ranged from about 7*s.* to 10*s.* a day?—Yes, that is so.

7343. Have you the means of giving a general average?—That is a general average.

7344. There is a wide difference between 7*s.* and 10*s.*?—Yes.

7345. What would be the average?—I think no hewers in our district would be getting less than 7*s.*, and none more than 10*s.* I have left it purposely in that form; if you take the average, perhaps it might be 8*s.* or 8*s.* 3*d.*

7346. Does that apply to the whole of the coal getters?—To the stallmen, not to the holers and fillers; they are employed under the stallmen, as I have already tried to explain, and they would get from 4*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* per day, according to the rate of payment.

7347. The rate of payment being fixed by bargain between the stallmen and fillers?—Yes, those who work in the stalls.

7348. I think you said that the proportion would be about one stallman to six or seven other men?—Two stallmen.

7349. Two to six or seven others?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt.*

7350. Is there any allowance in the shape of house or coal to the miners?—We have no houses, but they have some in the other part of Leicestershire. I cannot tell you whether they pay rent or not, but we give our colliers coal, and I think that is generally the practice throughout the district I represent.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

7351. Free coal?—Free coal to the coal getters and workers in the coal.

7352. You spoke of half-an-hour for snap; does that mean that the work is suspended entirely during that half-hour?—Yes; the pit stops.

7353. You stop winding coal?—The pit stops, and is doing nothing; the ropes are stopped altogether.

7354. And all the workmen have that half-hour?—Yes.

7355. You have not had a general strike, I think you said, since 1876?—Nothing of any importance, a day or two's strike, just that.

7356. Have there been many local strikes during that period?—No.

7357. In that year was the sliding scale in operation—I think you said it was in operation for about six months?—It was after the inflated time of 1873 and 1874; I could not give you the exact time, but somewhere about 1875 or 1876.

7358. Had not the tide turned then, and were not prices falling in 1875 and 1876?—Yes, the prices were falling very rapidly (I have already said that) in 1876, and that was the reason why they objected to the sliding-scale.

7359. I could not have quite understood you. What I understood you to say was that they had got the benefit of the sliding-scale while prices were rising, and that it was satisfactory during that time, but that when the prices began to fall the sliding-scale got into disrepute?—Yes; when the sliding-scale was arranged it was merely a local matter; it was not representing the whole of the district.

7360. And partly experimental?—It was partly experimental. The prices were high, and therefore wages would be high. Then there came, as you know, I daresay, in 1875 and 1876, particularly in the latter part of 1875, a very considerable drop in prices. That necessitated a reduction. I do not think that the reductions were more than two before they objected to it.

7361. Then, as a matter of fact, the sliding-scale had not been in operation during the rising market?—No.

7362. But it was based on the prices that were high?—That is it.

7363. Relatively high, that is, at that time?—Yes.

7364. Then you have not, I understand, anything of the nature of the joint committee in your district?—No, nothing of that sort.

7365. Would this board of arbitration that you suggest be something of that nature?—It would be an association for the whole district, and it would take men from each pit representing 100,000 tons, two men if it represented 200,000 tons, and so on. I mention 100,000 tons because there are several collieries in our district that do not turn out more than that in a year, and therefore they would have no representative if you do not go as low as 100,000 tons.

7366. And your would intend that board of arbitration to deal both with local and with general wage questions?—Only with questions relating to their own district.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

7367. Just so; but I mean not only a local dispute, arising out of a particular colliery, but also a district dispute involving alterations of wages?—Yes, certainly.

7368. Then, would you propose to have an umpire appointed in case the board itself did not agree?—Yes; and I would propose that that umpire should be selected by a Government official, and that his decision should be final.

7369. I think you said, in answer to Mr. Balfour, that that proposal had not been as yet suggested to the Associated Miners?—No, it has not.

7370. With regard to the dispute you mentioned about a question of wages and safety-lamps, the demand of the men, I understand, for the 2*d.* per ton extra, is based on the inconvenience and alleged loss that would be involved by the imperfect light given by the safety-lamp?—Yes, that is so.

7371. Has it been the custom to make any difference in the tonnage price when safety-lamps have been introduced?—Not until recently.

7372. Has it been done in some cases recently?—Yes, there is a dispute now in South Derbyshire; but I know a case where, some years ago, safety-lamps were instituted, and they took off so much because the collier did not supply his own candles; they considered that it was a saving to the collier, and they took off 1*d.* per ton.

7373. You mentioned that in your own district the per-centage of loss of work is about 10 per cent.?—Yes, about 10 per cent.

7374. And, I think you said that that is lower than in some other districts?—Yes, it varies from 10 per cent. to 20 per cent.

7375. Has that increased or diminished of late years; have you any figures to show that?—It has increased.

7376. As compared with, say, 5 or 10 years ago?—As compared with a period of low wages. The increased wages commenced in 1888, and we have given an advance of 40 per cent. since then.

7377. Have you made any comparison at all between the period of good trade—of inflated trade, as it has been called sometimes—during the years 1872, 1873, and 1874, and the period of good trade that has been prevailing recently?—I should think, from what I know of the thing, that the average stopping away would be a little bit more in 1873 than it is now; the wages were higher in 1873 than they are to-day. I know several of my own men who used to go away regularly from Friday to Monday, and never put in an appearance at all, but that is not so now.

7378. What one would like to ascertain is whether, comparing similar periods, the tendency is to increase the loss of work, or whether it is due entirely to the change of trade, comparing a depressed period with a time when the prices and wages were high?—I think it is principally owing to the increase of wages. The

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

men are rather more independent; they get more money per week, and they do not care about coming through wet weather to work at night, and so on.

7379. But you have no means of making a reliable comparison between the year 1873 and the year 1890 or 1891?—Yes, I have. From my own personal knowledge I should say there was more stopping away from work in 1873 than there is to-day.

7380. Could you put it in per-centage? You have said 10 per cent. now; what would it be in 1873?—I should think, certainly, the stopping away in our district in 1873 would be nearer 20 per cent. than anything else.

7381. So that things have improved in that respect?—The whole conduct of the workmen has improved since 1873, I think, very much, owing to the action of the committee who rule them in our district, and who instruct the Miners' Union delegate what he is to do. I think they are more under control altogether than they used to be.

7382. You said, "We never work on Saturday ourselves"; do you mean your own collieries?—I am speaking of our own collieries. I do not think we have worked two half days in the last two years.

7383. What is the custom, speaking generally?—Generally that is so in Leicestershire, but not in Derbyshire.

7384. And in any other districts?—No.

7385. Not in Derbyshire or Warwickshire?—No, it is not universally the case.

7386. Have the workmen, through their associations, approached the Associated Colliery Owners on the subject of reducing the present hours, except in the general meetings which have taken place in London; I mean locally; have they?—No, not locally; it is only through that meeting. The masters were represented in London, and the men were represented in London. Except those conferences, I know of no other way of doing it.

7387. Then I understand from you, as speaking not only for yourself, but for the coalowners whom you represent, although there would be an objection to eight hours from bank to bank, they would raise no objection to the reduction of the hours to eight hours' coal drawing?—I think that is so. I know that represents the views of a great many of the owners in the Association.

7388. With regard to the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund, is any arrangement made between the colliery owners and the workmen to have the payments of the workmen kept up at the colliery office; kept up by a deduction, I mean?—No, we do not allow deductions. The pay clerk is instructed to receive the pennies at the pay office, without any trouble to the workmen, and we account to the general Society without any deduction whatever from them for the collection.

7389. There is some arrangement made so as to facilitate the collection of the payments?—Yes, every arrangement.

Chairman.

7390. Every arrangement, except that the penny, as I may call it, is paid to the man as part of his wages, and is then paid by him to the clerk as his contribution?—Yes, that is so.

Mr. *Trow.*

7391. You have stated that you would have an umpire appointed by the Government?—By a Government official to be fixed by the Government.

7392. Would you have the arbitration made compulsory then by law?—Yes, I think it should be made compulsory, if arbitration is submitted to.

7393. And in case an employer or his workmen refused to carry out the award, what means would you have to enforce it?—I must leave that to the Government to decide. It is very necessary that they should be compelled to carry it out.

7394. You object to the Government dealing with the eight hours?—Yes, I do.

7395. Yet you ask them to deal with the rates of wages.—Only when the parties cannot agree themselves. What I suggest is, that a board of conciliation, or arbitration, call it what you like, should be locally formed, and if these two bodies could not agree, then that an umpire should be appointed by a Government official authorised to appoint somebody for the Government.

7396. And that the legislature should make arbitration compulsory?—No. I say that the acceptance of the umpire's decision should be made compulsory.

7397. Do you not think there would be a great difficulty in having the Government appoint an umpire?—I do not think so. I do not see why there should be any difficulty.

7398. Would it not be more satisfactory if each side met together and selected an umpire in whom they both had confidence, and who knew something about the dispute?—I am afraid that in that case the umpire's decision would not be respected.

7399. Why should you have any more fear in that case than in a case where the parties had no voice whatever in the selection?—I think that is the natural consequence. I have known plenty of umpires called in, and the men not agree to the decision of the umpire or quarrel with it.

7400. Not adhere to it?—Well, of course they have adhered to it, but they would not have an arbitration again; they would not go to it again.

7401. How would you elect the members of the board?—I have already stated that one man——

7402. How would you elect them. I do not say what should they represent?—Let the men select their own representatives, and the masters select theirs.

7403. You made a reference to a sliding scale?—Yes.

7404. I understood you to say there was some difficulty in getting it?—It did not work well

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

7439. They commence going down at six?—Yes.

7440. And they commence coming up at three?—Yes.

7441. Out of that time there is 40 minutes occupied in putting your men down and taking them up?—Yes.

7442. Then where do you get the eight hours and a half to wind?—We absolutely wind coal eight hours and a half; we do not bring the men up in nine hours. The pit is open nine hours, and they come up as soon as they have done the work.

7443. But that would really reduce the hours of winding if that be so. Is it this, that you are not particular to 10 minutes in leaving off winding—winding, say, to 10 minutes past three or a quarter past three?—We wind coal for eight and a half hours per day, five days a week.

7444. Then the men, of necessity, must be in the collieries more than nine hours?—Yes, occasionally.

7445. Not occasionally, but daily?—No, that depends whether they come up while we are winding coal, they sometimes do so; that is, if there is an opportunity they come up during the eight and a half hours.

7446. A portion of them may come up then?—Yes.

7447. Do you mean to say that you are winding coal and men for eight and a half hours?—Yes, that is it.

7448. What really do you put it down as; if the eight hour shift were adopted, how much less time would you then raise coal than you do now really?—About half an hour or three-quarters of an hour a day with us, but that would not be the general average which would be more. It depends upon the distance you are away from the face of the coal; you know that.

7449. Yes; but, of course, all the coal has to be brought to the bottom to be brought up?—Yes.

7450. We are talking about the time you wind coal?—Yes. In our case we do not turn as much coal as we have engine-power for. Our plant is put down to raise 1,000 tons a day, and, at the present moment, we have no more than sufficient men to wind 800 or 900 tons.

7451. That is the explanation?—Yes.

7452. Your engine-power is not utilised at present?—Not to the full extent.

7453. Not to the full extent it could be?—That is so.

7454. So far as your ability of raising coal, then, is concerned, you would be able to raise all the coal in eight hours that you do now?—Yes, we should.

7455. So that reducing the hours would not reduce the output with you?—I am speaking generally, not with our collieries.

7456. Generally, all the better?—No; do not misunderstand me. It would reduce the output generally, but it would not in our case, because our winding power is in excess of our requirements at the present time.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

7457. I did not entirely understand the system of sub-contracting; you said that two stallmen would be employing six or seven other men, now what would these other men be?—They would be hewers and fillers of coal.

7458. Then these two stallmen would be the butties under the company employing other hewers as well as fillers of coal?—Yes, they are the men to whom we pay the contract or charter price.

7459. How many coal faces would these two men have under their command?—Only one stall.

7460. What would be the width of that place, because you employ, say, eight men in it?—That varies considerably, according to the coal; we have eight men in a stall.

7461. Have you the system which is called the Nottingham system of working the coal?—No.

7462. Will you please describe the system?—The Nottingham system is somewhat different from ours, they work more men in a stall, I think, than we do.

7463. Will you kindly explain to the Commission what system of working the coal you adopt?—The face of the coal is set out in stalls of certain dimensions; when one stall is worked out then another stall is set out, and the two butties, as you call them, are to take charge of the stall and be responsible for the work.

7464. What would be the length of the face?—From 22 to 28 yards; it is what we call long wall.

7465. Perhaps I had better put that question to somebody else?—Yes, I think you had better put that to somebody else.

7466. It is the long wall system, you say?—Yes.

7467. It is not the pillar and stall at all?—No.

7468. These two stallmen, you say, have the power of employing hewers of coal as well as fillers of coal?—Yes, they do employ them.

7469. What class of men are these stallmen?—They are men of experience selected by the colliery as being experienced men to take charge of the stalls.

7470. Have they any official capacity beyond that?—No.

7471. And do they have the power of employing these men?—These men, I may tell you, all sign the colliery rules, but the buttie collier pays them.

7472. I am not upon paying; I am now upon the question of employing. Are we to understand that these stallmen have the power to employ; what is the system?—The stallmen employ their own hewers and their own fillers, subject to the approval of the colliery manager.

7473. What discretion or what power of supervision does the colliery manager retain over these men?—All the power.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

7474. When does he see them?—He sees them, and the underground manager sees them, the assistant manager sees them, and the deputy sees them.

7475. Are they taken to the overman, undermanager, or manager before they are employed?—Yes, and sign the colliery books.

7476. Before they are employed?—Yes. That does not only apply to stallmen but to the other men employed by the stallman.

7477. Are you in the habit of allowing men to sign your regular books before they are employed?—No, they have to sign our books when they are employed—when they are set on.

7478. After they are employed?—Before they are allowed to go down the pit they have to sign the rules.

7479. Then it comes back to this: that the stallman finds the men and takes them to the officials to be employed, is that so?—Yes, and sometimes the officials find the men for the stallman. If they find their own men they come and ask the sanction of either the underground manager or the deputy to the employment of these particular men.

7480. Do the men in your district put in force their powers under the 38th general rule to inspect the colliery?—No.

7481. Never?—I have never known an instance of that.

7482. Do you mean then to say that the men entirely ignore their rights under the general rule?—They have never exercised it in the case of our collieries.

7483. They never exercise that power?—No.

7484. Are the Dukes of Devonshire and Portland receivers of royalties in your district?—In the district which is covered by the Miners' District Fatal Accidents Society, yes.

7485. Are they receivers of large amounts?—I really could not say.

7486. Could you give us an idea what it is per ton they receive?—No, I could not; they are not colliery owners in our district, nor coal owners.

Sir *William Lewis.*

7487. I have, so far, been unable to appreciate your difficulty in the establishment of a sliding scale arrangement. Are the advances in your district, and the reductions as well, applicable, as a rule, to the whole of the district, or does each colliery advance or reduce independently of the district?—It is sometimes one case and sometimes the other.

7488. What would it be in general?—As a general rule the advances go together.

7489. Now, I take it, as to the wages in different collieries that, although they are not precisely the same, there is a certain relation maintained between them and the advances or reductions are made applicable to whatever circumstances exist at the time?—Yes.

7490. In that case, where is the difficulty in your agreeing, assuming that the workmen and yourselves were in accord; given a certain price realized as the average of the whole of the collieries within your district (assuming all the colliery owners agree, or assuming that only a portion of the colliery owners agree to place their books in the hands of auditors), and whenever the prices realized advance above that, the workmen are to have a certain proportion of advance, and whenever they are reduced the workmen are to accept a certain reduction?—There would be no difficulty if you assume all that to have been arranged previously.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

7491. Is there any difficulty in arranging that?—I do not think there is now, because the men are more combined together; the Union is stronger.

7492. I do not pretend to know your district as well as I do South Wales, but I know something of your district, and, having regard to your evidence to-day, I have not heard anything that would make it more difficult in your district than it has been in South Wales and other districts where this arrangement for the settlement of wages has prevailed for many years past, and you do not now think there will be any difficulty, assuming the men on the one hand and the owners on the other, wish to establish a scale for regulating wages in the future?—No.

7493. I do not think you told us what work was embraced in the contract with the stallmen?—It is the getting the coal, the timbering the stall, and the filling the coal into tubs.

7494. And the maintenance of the stallroad as regards repairs—is that included?—Yes.

7495. Now, are the stallmen selected from among the most experienced men?—Always.

7496. And they employ men to assist them of more or less experience?—Yes, with the approval of the manager.

7497. And then a man who may be one day working for a stallman, when an opportunity offers, and he has had sufficient experience in the ordinary course, might become a stallman?—Yes.

7498. So that, although these men employ a certain number of men along the face, it does not follow at all that the men who are paid by the day are not experienced miners?—No, it does not.

7499. And they are not employed, as you told Mr. Abraham, until their names are submitted to the manager?—And they have to sign our rules.

7500. Have you found any objection on the part of the men to that arangement?—No.

7501. You spoke of a difficulty in holding the men when you were attempting to settle the sliding scale?—Yes.

7502. I think you subsequently stated that at that time the Union was not very strong in the district?—There was very little organization indeed.

7503. But you would not think that there would be any difficulty in the present state of the Union in making an arrangement for a sliding scale to govern the advances and reductions?—Subject to what you said just now, that

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

the matter were arranged by the masters and the men.

7504. Are there many collieries in your district which have recently changed from naked lights to safety lamps?—Not in Leicestershire; in South Derbyshire there are several.

7505. What is the particular colliery that you refer to now where the men are claiming 2*d.* increase?—It is a colliery in South Derbyshire.

7506. Is that in consequence of an award after an inquiry, or is it a voluntary adoption of safety lamps by the owners?—Safety lamps have been in use for a considerable period, and now the men demand 2*d.* per ton.

7507. Although they have been working by safety lamps for a certain period without making any claim?—Yes.

7508. Are their circumstances different now from their circumstances at the time when they adopted safety lamps?—No, I think not, except that the safety lamps are more generally in use now than they were two or three years ago.

7509. Take that particular colliery; was it a partial adoption of safety lamps before, and now has it become a general adoption to the exclusion of local lights?—Yes, that is so.

7510. And that is a matter under consideration at the present time?—It is.

7511. I think you said that you had had very few, if any, disputes at individual collieries for some years past?—Not since 1876.

7512. Then how do you think it is necessary to appoint an arbitrator, and a conciliation board, for the purpose of dealing with matters as to which you have had no difficulty?—I mentioned that in connexion with safety lamps, and the demand for safety lamps, which is going on throughout the district, I had a case which occurred at Snibstone colliery, where they wanted to alter the basis price, or the charter price. They had 40 per cent. upon what was the charter price, and now they seek to alter the price, and want 2*d.* per ton in addition to what they have had for 20 years past, and the 40 per cent. besides.

7513. Regardless of any difference in the circumstances?—Yes, the same seam exactly.

7514. So that you have had some difficulties in individual collieries, then?—I should have had a difficulty if I had not paid the 2*d.* I look upon that as a most arbitrary sort of demand, and if there had been a court of conciliation, I should have gone to it.

7515. Then would you suggest that this court of conciliation should deal with details arising between the management, and the workmen, from time to time, at each individual colliery?—If it was a question of that sort, affecting the basis price which had been in existence for some 20 years.

7516. That is the basis of the cutting price?—Yes.

7517. In regard to the question of allowance, and other kinds of questions that the management have to deal with, almost every pay would you suggest that it would be practicable to carry on the collieries in your district with an

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

arrangement that on any difference arising between the management and the workmen, on such cases, they should appeal to a court, and, failing agreement with that court of conciliation, that they should leave it to an arbitrator?—No, I do not.

7518. Would you mind specifying the kinds of questions that you would suggest should be left to an arbitrator?—That is one which I have just mentioned, where the demand of 2*d.* per ton has been made; and so with regard to safety lamps. I should put them in the same category.

7519. That is in the event of a colliery changing from naked lights to safety lamps, and the workmen and owners failing to agree, you would leave that to arbitration?—Yes.

7520. And you think it is necessary to have a standing arbitrator to deal with the number of questions that would arise of that kind?—Well, I do not think they are so numerous.

7521. You think they are not numerous?—No.

7522. So I should have expected?—Still, they may be.

7523. Have you inquired as to what has been done in other districts, where safety lamps have been imposed upon the colliery owners by the Home Office, after arbitration?—No, I have not.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

7524. With regard to the question of arbitration, of which you were speaking, I think you said that you would leave the umpire to be appointed by a Government official?—Yes, I answered that question merely as far as regarded my own collieries. I did not answer it for the other owners.

7525. Has it occurred to you whom you would appoint, or what sort of an official?—No, I do not think I could mention the official.

7526. The umpire would have a very important function, would he not?—Yes, I think so.

7527. That being so, would it not be necessary to formulate in your own mind whom you would agree to, what class of person?—I should be willing, myself, to leave it to the Government Inspector of the district, but I am merely speaking for myself. I am not answering for the other owners.

7528. I think you said you would even go so far as to allow the arbitrator to settle whether it should be an eight hours' day, or not?—I answered that question, as far as I myself was concerned for the two collieries I represent, not for the district. I have already stated that our engine power is very far in excess of what we are drawing coal, and therefore it would not make very much difference to us, but it might make a great deal of difference to other collieries. I do not think I could answer that question for them.

7529. Then should I take it that that would not be a general answer, but an answer for a specific place?—It would apply to my own place.

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

workmen whom you have employed, or whom your manager has employed, without either consulting you or your manager?—Do you mean the contractor?

7563. The sub-contractor—the stallman, as you call him?—He is the contractor.

7564. Well, the contractor?—Could he do what?

7565. Could he dismiss any man whom you had employed without consulting with you?—He could object to working with a man, and I have known many instances of that occur at times in the 39 years, and the manager has found another man.

7566. He has just had to dismiss the man he took exception to?—No, not dismiss him; perhaps he might put on another man who would not object to him.

7567. Have you ever known any occasion where a man could not get other work in the colliery and had to go to another colliery for work?—No.

7568. Do you make any allowances for rent to any of your miners?—No; we have no cottages.

7569. But to those who do not live in your cottages, as they do in Northumberland and Durham, do you make an allowance?—No.

7570. In the strike of 1876 did the men offer to meet you by arbitration during the running of the strike for the purpose of settling it?—No.

7571. Did you offer arbitration to the men?—Yes.

7572. And they refused?—It was through our offer of arbitration that the mayor of Leicester came down.

7573. Then the owners requested the mayor of Leicester to come down?—Yes.

7574. In your evidence you have stated that 39 years ago the miner's position was much worse than it is to-day; can you give us the hours the miners worked then?—Yes, 12 hours a day, from 6 in the morning till 6 at night for six days a week, and they had an hour and a half for snap time.

7575. What were the wages at that period?—Very much less than they are to-day.

7576. Therefore you would attribute the general prosperity of the miner to shorter hours and better wages?—Yes, certainly.

7577. Which is giving him an opportunity of educating himself—to take an interest in parochial and other matters which you stated?—Yes.

7578. As a colliery owner, do you think you suffer very much from competition?—It depends upon the trade; if there is a slack trade we suffer very much.

7579. And you would be aware of the differences existing in certain parts of the country in the hours of labour?—Yes.

7580. Do you not think that if there was an agreement come to between the coal owners of the country and the colliers of the country for a maximum eight hours' day, so that you would not be working 9½ hours, and, perhaps,

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

Yorkshire working eight hours, it would regulate competition better?—I do not think it would very much. The quality of the coal and other circumstances would affect it. For instance, in Nottinghamshire they can raise coal very much cheaper than we can, and therefore they can afford to sell it cheaper than we can.

7581. Do they work less hours in Nottinghamshire than you do?—About the same, I think. Mr. Corfield will be able to tell you that.

7582. Can you tell me what proportion of the men are upon the Committee of the Permanent Relief Fund which you would like to see them join?—There is a very large number of ordinary members, who are paid for their time, and who are paid their expenses.

7583. I have got the rules from a gentleman here, and I notice that there are 25 ordinary and 25 honorary elected members?—Yes.

7584. May I take it that the honorary elected members are colliery owners?—Yes, or their representatives.

7585. Therefore the colliery owner has equal representation with the ordinary members?—No, that is not so. The colliery owner does not vote at all upon the questions which are dealt with by the ordinary members. We leave the ordinary members to settle the questions which affect themselves. The finance committee or sub-committee deals with questions of claims of money, and the honorary member votes for the ordinary member.

7586. Yes, but the fact remains the same, there are 50 members of the committee, 25 taken from the colliery owners and 25 from the members, and that committee can distribute its sub-committee on finance or otherwise as it thinks fit?—Yes. I may say that I have been at plenty of meetings when there have not been more than three honorary members, and when there has been a full attendance of ordinary members.

7587. Yes, and that might be reversed?—Yes.

7588. I was going to say that I have the balance sheet here, and I find that the "proprietor's contributions"—which I take to be the colliery proprietor's contributions to the fund for the year amounts to 440*l.* 15*s.* 9*d.*, and the members' contributions for the year have been 3,543*l.* odd?—Yes, that is so.

7589. Therefore you will see that representation does not exactly go alongside of taxation there. I thought perhaps that might have been the means of preventing many of the colliers in your district from joining, as you would desire, this permanent relief fund?—I do not think that has anything to do with it, because if you look at the management fund a little below the figures you have given to me you will find there was a balance of 348*l.* 18*s.* 3*d.* carried to the general fund account.

7590. Yes, but I am not dealing with the question of management further than the question of representation, as being a means whereby the colliers in your locality do not appreciate

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

this fund as you would desire?—In my immediate locality they do not, but in the locality represented by the association they do most decidedly.

7591. Can you give us the number of men employed in the collieries that this district covers?—I have not the figures.

7592. You have 18,000 odd members in this fund, have you not?—Yes.

7593. Can you give us an idea what proportion that is to the whole?—Mr. Saunders, our secretary, states that it is a third.

Mr. *Mundella.*

7594. You express yourself as being generally favourable to the establishment of a board of conciliation and of arbitration for your district?—Yes.

7595. And you have said that for all general questions arising in the district, whether local difficulties, or wages difficulties, or difficulties as to hours, you would be willing to refer all such disputes to a board of conciliation and arbitration?—Personally, I should.

7596. That is your personal opinion?—Yes.

7597. You also said, and this strictly is a personal opinion, that you thought the umpire should be appointed by a Government official?—Yes, I did say so.

7598. Have you considered that in that case the conclusion might, perhaps, very reasonably arise in the minds of the men, that the ultimate decision on their wages in questions of non-agreement betwixt employer and employed would rest with an umpire appointed by the Government?—Yes.

7599. Would not that prejudice the settlement generally?—I do not see why.

7600. Are you not aware that there are very successful boards of conciliation and arbitration, which have been in operation for, I think, nearly a quarter of a century, who appoint their umpires annually by the consent of both parties, that is to say, at the first meeting of the year they appoint an umpire agreed to by both parties?—I am not aware that that is so. It is a very good plan though.

7601. Might not that remove all suspicion of Government intervention, and all distrust of the umpire on the part of either masters or men, if the umpire was a gentleman in whom both of them had confidence, selected probably from their own locality?—Perhaps it would.

7602. It would remove all doubts about the question of Government intervention?—Yes.

7603. You were asked whether there were questions for a board of conciliation—I think it was Sir William Lewis asked you some questions on that point—and then you referred to the question of safety-lamps; but it is impossible to conduct, is it not, a number of collieries in any district without minor difficulties arising from time to time?—Quite so.

7604. And is it not desirable that there should be a small committee of the board of conciliation, who should deal with those minor questions from time to time, and, if possible, nip the dispute in the bud, and prevent strikes arising therefrom?—Yes, decidedly so.

Mr. *Mundella*—continued.

7605. That is your idea, I understand?—Yes.

7606. You are aware, perhaps, that—I think it is in Durham—the county court judge has been selected by common consent of both parties, and for years he has been the umpire in case of any disagreement. Are you aware of that?—I was not aware of that.

7607. That is the case; but although he is, so to speak, a Government, or, rather, a local official, he is selected practically by the two parties, who mutually have confidence in him?—That would carry out my own idea.

7608. I think you said that in 1873 the men were working very irregularly?—In 1873, yes. That was the time of the panic, as we call it. There was a very great demand for coal then.

7609. Wages were high?—Very high.

7610. And the men worked irregularly?—They did.

7611. And you say that, although you have had a recurring period of high wages in recent times, the men have worked better recently?—They are working better to-day, figuratively speaking, than they did in 1873.

7612. On the whole, the conduct of the workmen has improved considerably since 1873?—Very much.

7613. And there is a greater disposition on the part of the men to meet the masters, and on the part of the employers to meet the men, is there not?—Yes.

7614. What you want is a board of conciliation to bring the two parties together?—Yes, to use your own words, to nip the dispute in the bud.

7615. Prevention being better than cure?—Yes, that is so.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

7616. You mentioned that in your colliery you have a winding power in excess of your present requirements; is that the case at other collieries in your district?—I am afraid it is not so. Ours is a comparatively new colliery, and we put down a very big plant, and it will be some number of years before we get a face of coal to work out the quantity.

7617. Would it be possible for existing collieries so far to improve the winding apparatus as to enable them to wind in eight hours what they now take eight-and-a-half hours to wind?—That is a very wide question, and I am afraid I could not answer that.

7618. One other point. In answer, I think it was, to Mr. Tait, you observed that the conditions of different coal fields vary, and that in Nottinghamshire, for instance, coal could be raised at a cheaper rate than in South Derbyshire?—Yes.

7619. Nevertheless, the hours of the men in the two districts were approximately the same?—I think that is so. I do not speak for Nottinghamshire; I am not very much acquainted with the time they work there.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

7620. Could you tell us who gets the benefit of this superior advantage which Nottingham possesses?—I should think they all get it, men and masters.

7621. Are wages higher in Nottinghamshire?—I think the men in Nottinghamshire get more money per week—I am so informed, at any rate—and I believe the masters get more profits, but I should not like to pledge myself.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

7622. And are the royalties higher also?—No, lower.

7623. Lower in Nottinghamshire?—Yes.

Mr. *Trow.*

7624. Then the fact will be that the men in Leicestershire are working harder, and they are getting less pay than what the men in Nottinghamshire are doing?—I believe that is so.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. FREDERICK CHANNER CORFIELD called and examined.

Chairman.

7625. You reside at Ormonde Codnor, Derby, and you are a Justice of the Peace for the County of Derby?—I am.

7626. You have been connected with the Butterley Company, who are owners of large collieries and iron works in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Staffordshire, for the last 25 years?—Yes.

7627. Have you for the last 12 years of the period been, and are you still, the general manager of the whole of the Butterley Company's collieries in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire?—I am.

7628. How many persons are employed in these collieries of the Butterley Company?—About 3,500.

7629. And their output is what?—Their output is, roughly, 1,000,000 tons, including the output of the ironstone.

7630. Does ironstone form any considerable part?—No, it is not a very great output, but you would have to include it in taking the 1,000,000 tons.

7631. Is it ironstone in connexion with seams of coal?—Yes, it is.

7632. Are you a member of the Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Leicestershire Colliery Owners' Association?—I am.

7633. Are you a member of the executive committee?—I am.

7634. And also a member of the council of the Mining Association of Great Britain?—I am.

7635. By whom are you appointed to give evidence here?—By the owners of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, and Leicestershire and Warwickshire, but Mr. White has taken Leicestershire and Warwickshire more particularly as he lives in that district.

7636. The statistics given by Mr. White as regards the number of men employed on output relate to South Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Warwickshire, do they not?—They do.

7637. Those you are about to give will relate to Derbyshire other than South Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire unitedly?—Yes.

7638. About how many men are employed in Derbyshire other than South Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire?—The number given me is 53,396 men and boys employed in and about the mines.

Chairman—continued.

7639. And the output during the year 1890 was?—16,740,117 tons.

7640. Therefore the evidence that you are going to give relates not exactly to the same district as that to which Mr. White's evidence relates, but is it the fact that much of the evidence that he has given may be regarded as applicable to your district?—Yes, a very great deal of it.

7641. I do not, therefore, propose to put to you all the questions that I put from the Chair to Mr. White, but would rather invite you to state that which you think it desirable to lay before the Commission, which has not been given to them by Mr. White. In the first place, perhaps, as to wages—that is the daily earnings of the stallmen—what do they range in your district?—They range almost the same as the evidence that Mr. White gave—they range from 7*s.* to 10*s.* for stallmen or contractors, and for sub-contractors from 5*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* a day.

7642. Does the same system of butty men and the engaging by them of assistants prevail in your district?—Yes, it does. Mr. White's evidence on that head was the same as mine would be.

7643. Have you anything to add to the statement made to us on that subject by Mr. White?—Merely I should like to mention that a stallman or a contractor cannot dismiss any man under him. The man under him is directly employed by the owner, and he cannot in any way interfere with him, unless through the owner or through the manager of the colliery.

7644. I understood the system to be that the butty suggested the employment of a certain man, and if that was approved by the manager, he was so employed?—That is so.

7645. And thereupon he was inscribed upon the books of the firm and became liable to the ordinary rules of the firm; is that so?—That is so.

7646. And that if the butty wished him to be dismissed he would have to obtain sanction from the manager for so doing?—Yes, we should not allow him to be dismissed. He would have to be found employment in the colliery because he was equally a servant of the company the same as the man who objected to him.

7647. There might be conduct on his part suggesting his entire dismissal?—Possibly.

Chairman—continued.

7672. Then, perhaps, that would be in respect of a still larger district than Derbyshire and Nottingham?—That took in nearly the whole of England at that time.

7673. Not the north of England probably?—It took in a great portion of it.

7674. Rather the midland district and the south?—Yes, the midland district.

7675. In what manner are local disputes dealt with in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, those that are special to a particular colliery?—Those are generally dealt with by the masters on the spot. They sometimes see the representatives of the men at their offices, in some cases they do not.

7676. But they are not dealt with by any joint committee?—No; there is no arranged joint committee.

7677. On the whole, are the relationships between the employers and the employed in the colliery districts of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire harmonious and satisfactory?—I should say that they are generally amicable. Small strikes have taken place lasting for a few days at certain collieries, but they have been settled. They are generally on an application for an advance of wages.

7678. Have you any suggestion to make for preventing strikes or securing more harmonious working?—I should suggest, as the previous witness has done, arbitration boards, and also the appointment of a legal referee. My object in suggesting a legal referee, is that after the men and the masters have met and arranged a certain price to be paid, there should be some way of making the arrangement which was come to binding for a certain time on both parties.

7679. By a legal referee, do you mean a member of the legal profession?—I would not suggest that. I would not go so far as that.

7680. In what sense do you use the word "legal" when speaking of a legal referee?—I used the word legal so that any decision arrived at might be made binding upon both parties, because the present arrangement, never mind what decision is arrived at, may be upset the next day.

7681. Have you had any experience of that being done, of that result following?—I have had a good deal of experience after arrangements have been made between the men and the masters of their being upset almost immediately.

7682. Could you give us any illustration of that?—That would only be general. I could give it you in my own particular case, but I am not anxious to bring any particular case. Still, that is the feeling in our district, that if we could get something that would be really binding, we should be willing to bind ourselves if the men would be willing to be bound on their part.

7683. My reason for putting the question was this, and it will, perhaps, enable you to answer it. What I wanted to know was whether the experience to which you refer was of the failure to carry out with the men such an understanding or agreement come to between them and their individual employers, or the employers' ma-

Chairman—continued.

nagers, or whether it was an agreement come to between the colliery owners and the Union?—The particular case that I had in my mind at the time, was a case where an arrangement was made to pay a certain sum to the men and without any alteration in the wages or any alteration in the value of work, or in the trade, or anything of that sort, it was sought to raise the standard that was arranged before it had been working many weeks. When that was arranged, in another few weeks it might be upset again; there seemed to be no finality.

7684. Was the arrangement so upset an arrangement between the colliery owner or his managers and the men employed at that particular colliery?—Yes.

7685. Without the good faith, as it were, of a Union being pledged to the bargain?—Yes; the men's Union was pledged to it to a certain extent; it was an arrangement come to.

7686. Were the men's Union or their officers parties to the arrangement, that you say was unduly set aside?—Yes, they were. I do not think it was unduly set aside. Perhaps I ought to explain what I mean. Without there being any reason for an alteration, an application was made to upset the decision arrived at.

7687. Do you remember how long the arrangement arrived at had endured?—Only a few weeks.

7688. Do you think it possible, if there existed a board of arbitration or conciliation, even though it had to use your expression no "legal referee," that its decisions given with a certain amount of formality and solemnity as one may say might not be more likely to be adhered to than these that were merely settled in the offices of the works affected?—One hears a good deal of decisions being upset, and arbitration board's decisions not being maintained. I think the whole difficulty is in maintaining the decision.

Mr. *Mundella.*

7689. Have you an illustration of one being upset?—I understood Mr. White to state in his evidence that they upset a sliding scale; they would not have it, and it was thrown up.

7690. (Mr. *White.*) That was not a board of conciliation and it was only at one colliery?—It was decision arrived at in the same way. We have had no formal decisions.

Chairman.

7691. Do not you think it probable that the decisions must be in the main enforced by public opinion, and by a sense of the enduring interests of both parties?—I should like to think so. But I am afraid I have my doubts of public opinion being able to enforce decisions.

7692. What would be the alternative? Would it be a money penalty? What, in your opinion, would be the mode in which decisions might be enforced?—I am afraid I have hardly considered that sufficiently.

7693. You would recognise that you could not put several thousand men or several thou-

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

7712. But is it not your object to avoid a strike?—The object of the whole thing is to prevent a difficulty between owner and workman. That is my object in suggesting it.

7713. To cut the matter short, you have really no means in your mind by which this power which you propose to intrust to an arbitrator could be made effective?—Unless you think that an arrangement could be made which it would be possible for the Government to make binding for a certain time.

7714. But how?—If it could not be done, of course it would fall through. I should have thought it could be worked out, but I am not a lawyer.

7715. You have not any plan to suggest?—No, I have not a plan to suggest.

Mr. *Burt.*

7716. Does the "butty" system prevail through the district with which you are connected?—Entirely; and has done so for some time.

7717. Have there been any attempts made to alter it, similar to those spoken of by Mr. White?—Not in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire that I know of. I think not.

7718. Do the workmen generally acquiesce in it, and accept it, as a satisfactory arrangement?—In my experience they do. I have never heard any complaint whatever against it.

7719. There would be a good deal of inequality in the rate of wages prevailing, I suppose, as a consequence of the system?—Yes, there would be by the day men; but no doubt the sub-contractor would regulate that according to the ability of a man to earn wages.

7720. Stallmen as a rule get a good deal higher pay than those that they employ, I presume?—As I have given it in my evidence, they get rather higher pay; but then they have responsibilities in looking after the men in the stall, and are responsible for certain things under the Act of Parliament.

7721. The hewers are not confined to the stallmen?—No. The stallmen pay the others for doing the hewing and packing; of course they assist.

7722. They are paid by the day, are they?—The hewers are generally paid by the piece, a stint, two yards. They are paid so much for holing two yards, and so much a ton for loading, and in some instances they are paid so much a yard for packing.

7723. As between the employer and the stallmen, the total amount is paid to the stallmen, and they divide it?—Yes. They sub-divide it. They are paid so much a ton, and have certain work to do, which is included in that price per ton.

7724. Is it the general rule for the pits to be idle on the Saturdays with you?—As a general thing it is. The Saturday holiday is not universal.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

7725. When they do work on Saturday, I infer from what you have said that the hours are considerably shorter than on other days?—When they work on Saturday they work 5¼ hours without any meal-time. That is the general rule.

7726. Coal drawing for that period?—Yes.

7727. When you speak of 6½ hours as being the present working time, do you mean that as an average in the face?—I did not mean that that was what was taking place now, what I meant was that if the Eight hours bank-to-bank Bill became law the men would not work more than that time at the face.

7728. What would be their present hours in the face—actual working?—Of course that 6½ hours was more of an average. It depends very much upon the size of the colliery and the power of the engine to bring the men up in a certain time. It would vary in almost every colliery, I should think, in England.

7729–79. According to the distance in bye, and all that?—Yes.

7780. You could not, perhaps, state approximately what would be that time?—I am afraid I have no means that would be of any use in calculating. I have nothing to go by. I am afraid I could not give an answer to that which would be of any use to the Commission.

7781. When you spoke about the decisions of arbitrators being upset, were you referring to matters that have come under your own observation and experience?—I was speaking of quite a local thing within my own experience.

Chairman.

7782. I do not think Mr. Corfield said decisions of arbitrators, but he referred to arrangements come to?—That is what I meant. I have had no experience as to arbitrations whatever. We have not had them in our district at all.

Mr. *Burt.*

7783. Had your answer reference to decisions come to by a joint committee representing both sides?—The instance I gave was merely of an arrangement between workmen and one particular coal owner. I have no experience of what you suggest now.

7784. Are you aware that it has been given in evidence before this Commission, if not, I dare say you will be glad to hear it, that in two districts, namely, Cleveland and Northumberland, in which joint committees have been in existence for about 17 or 18 years, there has scarcely been a case, although thousands of references have been made, in which there has been a refusal on the part of either side to accept the decision?—I am very pleased to hear that.

7785. You were not aware of that?—I was not aware of that.

7786. Would that modify your opinion as to the difficulty in carrying out arrangements between employers and workmen?—Of course the tendency of knowledge of that sort would be to do away with the necessity of a legal arbitrator, if one could depend upon it.

Mr. *Abraham.*

7787. What are the extra responsibilities you refer to which, in your opinion, are attached to stallmen more than other hewers of coal?—The responsibilities that are placed upon them by the Mines Regulation Act. They are called upon to superintend the whole of the stall—see to the safety. We hold them responsible for the safety of the stall—for the men under them. In our special rules we have a number of rules particularly arranging what the responsibilities of the stall men are.

7788. Have you a copy of those rules?—I have. One of the rules is this: "Every stall-" man, or other work person in charge of any " stall, gate, or other working place, before " allowing anyone to commence work, shall " satisfy himself by careful personal examina-" tion that it is in a safe state for working " therein. He shall also carefully examine the " stall, or other working place under his charge, " at frequent intervals during his shift, and at " once withdraw his men in case of danger, and " report to the manager, under-manager, or " deputy. He shall see that the stall or other " working place is in a safe state before he " leaves work. If he finds it impossible to make " it safe, he shall fence it off, and at once report " to the manager, under-manager, or deputy. " A stall includes the gate end, gate lips, and " ripping. When a stall is at work, the stall-" man, or a person appointed by the manager, " under-manager, or deputy, as stallman for the " shift, shall have to take charge thereof."

7789. Is that in conformity with the Mines Act?—That is in conformity with the Mines Regulation Act of 1887. These rules are approved by the Secretary of State, for our district. There are a number of other rules in regard to stallmen.

7790. Is there an examination of the working places before commencing work, previous to the one alluded to here?—Yes, by the deputy of the district, and each stallman must examine his working-place for himself to see that it is perfectly safe.

7791. Does this rule relieve other hewers of coal in that stall from the responsibility of examining their own working place?—No. They must examine and see that their own place is safe. But their working place is only just where they actually work. The stallman has probably a distance of, say, from 45 to 60 yards, where he has four to six men working, and he is responsible for the whole distance.

7792. What would be the length of face working?—In Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire it is nearly all long-wall. In fact it is all worked long-wall. The long-wall is a long face, with a gate going at an angle up to it, and then a certain distance is marked off, as I say, from 45 to 60 yards, which a stallman or two stallmen are responsible for.

7793. But that does not relieve the collier from examining the place in that distance that he himself works at?—It does not.

Sir *William Lewis.*

7794. You said just now, if the eight hour day was established, that the actual work in the face, and I presume you meant the average in your district, would be about 6½ hours?—Something like that.

7795. But you stated you were not able to say what the work is at present in the face; could you not tell the Commission what the present work in the face is?—What I wanted to say was this: I could not give any answer that would be of value to the Commission, because I have not had any returns of it for my district. I should not like to give a misleading answer.

7796. Do they vary to such an extent that you could not give us an average of the colliers in the district at the present time?—I could ascertain that for the Commission in a few days, if required.

7797. Then, would you be able to tell us what, in your opinion, would be the extra cost of working, owing to the adoption of an eight hour day as against the present system?—I could not say how much it actually would be, but it would be more.

7798. Considerably more? — Considerably more.

7799. Do you think that would have any effect upon the competitive power of collieries in your district?—I think it would have, because it would restrict the output at a time, probably, when the books were full of orders in the winter time.

7800. Do you think it would possibly lead to some of the more expensive collieries being closed?—Quite possibly. In fact, I should think it would close some of the collieries.

Mr. *Tait.*

7801. I think you said in the management of the collieries with which you are associated, there are about 53,000 men employed, who turn out about 16,740,000 and odd tons of coal?—Yes.

7802. Will you tell us how long you have been a colliery manager?—I have held a certificate since 1872 and have managed collieries ever since.

7803. How long have you had the superintendence of this large number of men?—I have not had the superintendence of that number of men, that is over the whole district; the number of men I have had is 3,500. You see the number you have there is for the whole district of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

7804. You have 3,500 men practically under you?—I have.

7805. And you will have had considerable experience during your managership in meeting these men for the purpose of settling trade disputes?—I settle them all myself.

7806. And the suggestions you have made to the Commission are based upon that experience?—Yes, just so.

7807. Do you, as a manager having large experience, favour this contracting by stallmen?—My opinion of it is that in our district it works very well; personally I should be just as

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

pleased to work without it, but the men have never made any objection whatever to it.

7808. Have your owners or yourself attempted to do away with it?—No, as long as it works comfortably between the owner and workmen I see no reason to alter it.

7809. You admit it is practically giving to one class of workmen an advantage over another; that man is receiving the benefit of another man's work?—I do not think that he receives more than he ought to have for the responsibility that he has.

7810. It is not a question as to whether he receives more than he is entitled to. According to your experience as a manager is it the fact that he is the recipient of money in wages, which practically has been earned by those who are working under him, although they are both workmen?—They are all more or less skilled workmen; but the stallman is more skilled than the men who work under him.

7811. In proportion to the amount of work he can take out of these people, so he will get more money?—Supposing he has an advance of 10 per cent. upon the coal sent out of his place he has to advance the men under him in the same ratio, or else there would be a strife between him and his men.

7812. What I wish to get at is this: that the more these stallmen can get out of the men that are working under them, the more money they will have at the end of the week?—The tendency would be that, of course.

7813. Therefore it would be to a certain extent, at all events, his policy to drive the men as hard as possible?—Yes, but I do not think that is practised, or I should have heard a complaint.

7814. I ask, in working, what the tendency would be under the peculiar circumstances of employment?—The tendency would be as you suggest.

7815. In answer to Mr. Abraham you said that these special rules which had met with the approval of the Home Secretary, did not in any way release your responsibility?—Not at all; not in any way whatever.

7816. The special rules which you have drawn out for the stallmen's guidance, and which have met with the Home Secretary's approval, are rules which you have adopted for the safe government of your colliery?—For the whole district we have the same rules, and I think identically the same rules are used in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Warwickshire.

7817. Suppose there was a violation of one of these rules on the part of the stallman, where is his responsibility under the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1887?—His responsibility is clearly defined within these rules.

7818. But supposing he does not carry it out, and anything befalls?—We can prosecute him under these rules just as if they were in the Act of Parliament.

7819. Can you under these rules?—Yes, they form part of the Act of Parliament now.

Sir *William Lewis.*

7820. Are the workmen in your district in the habit of availing themselves of the provision for inspecting workings under general Rule 38?—I have never heard of it being used yet in the district which I represent.

Mr. *Mundella.*

7821. You say that you hanker after some binding decision or legal decision by the Government with respect to a board of arbitration?—I think, as I have already said, if some means could be suggested, which I am not in a position to work out the details of, or rather to suggest details of to the Commission, but if some arrangement could be made in which both the coalowner and the workmen should have to abide by the decision arrived at, never mind how it was arrived at, that would be a great advantage to the trade.

7822. Have you considered whether you can arrive at a more binding conclusion even by a Government arbitration than you could by a voluntary arbitration; could you make a decision more binding on either side, even if there were a Government arbitration, than you could under a voluntary arbitration?—I should have thought Government would have been able to do so.

7823. Would it be possible to compel employers to employ if it was not to their interest to employ, or compel workmen to work, if they were indisposed to work, could you prevent the colliers going elsewhere for employment if they could get better wages?—I do not suppose I could, but what I should suggest would be if in a certain district, say Derbyshire, 2*s.* a ton was paid for getting a ton of coal, it would be possible to bind the coalowner to pay 2*s.* and to bind the workman, if he intended to work in that pit, to receive 2*s.*

7824. Could you bind the coalowner if it did not pay him to conduct his pit at a loss?—I take it that 2*s.* a ton would have been the arrangement come to between the owner and the men.

7825. That would not be an arrangement come to between the owner and the men; that is what I want to point out to you, otherwise it would be a voluntary arbitration. But if it was a price fixed without consent of the employer and the workmen, might you not find yourself placed in a position either that the price was so high that you could not work the mine, or that the price was so low that the workmen would not be content to stop in the district, and then in either case would not the arbitration be at an end?—That would be the tendency.

7826. Having heard the statement that was made to you by Mr. Burt that there is arbitration in existence which is enforced by public opinion, and which is honourably adhered to by working men and enforced by Trade Unions, would it not be far better, instead of trying to set up a Government system, or importing in any way

Mr. *Mundella*—continued.

the officials of the Government or the suspicion which would attach necessarily to any Government system of arbitration, to leave it entirely a voluntary system between masters and men?—I have only suggested the Government legally binding the decision after it had been arrived at mutually. I have never suggested that an arbitrator should come down and arbitrate. I would have the masters and the men arrange between them, and if they think well, let them have it made binding.

7827. Is it not the better course to have it free in and free out, and leave it to the good sense and the good feeling of both parties?—That is not my opinion.

7828. Notwithstanding the illustrations which have been cited, you still look to some compulsory settlement?—I do so.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. FREDERICK PARKER RHODES called and examined.

Chairman.

7829. Are you a solicitor practising at Rotherham?—I am.

7829*a*. And you hold several public appointments there, and, among others, you are the Secretary of the South Yorkshire Coal Owners' Association?—I am.

7830. You attend here as such secretary by the direction and on behalf of that association?—I do.

7831. What district does that association cover?—That association covers the district which is known as South Yorkshire, but that, geographically, is not quite a correct expression. It embraces really a small portion of North Notts and a small portion of North Derbyshire. It is best described by saying that it reaches from Shireoaks Colliery, near Worksop, as its most southerly point to a point about midway between Barnsley and Wakefield on the north.

7832. Is it your duty, as secretary of the association, to keep yourself informed on all matters affecting the coal trade of the district?—It is.

7833. In that capacity did you prepare the replies which have been sent in to the printed questions of the Commission?—I did.

7834. About how many firms are connected with your association?—About 25 firms altogether.

7835. And about how many workpeople are employed?—I do not know whether I could give that with accuracy or not. I could put it in this way: that the total number of workpeople employed in the county is about 57,000. Of that, more than half would be in South Yorkshire, and I should say about two-thirds employed at the associated collieries.

7836. From that it may be inferred that about two-thirds of the employing firms are members of your association, and one-third not?—Yes, I think I have rather understated it. I should put it a little over that.

7837. Does your association deal directly or indirectly with matters of difference arising between the employers and workmen?—Yes, it does.

7838. In what manner?—In this way: With regard to disputes at individual collieries we act by means of a joint committee of owners and workmen. They inquire into the merits of the dispute, endeavour to settle it, if possible; and if not, then they agree upon an umpire to whom the question is referred. With regard to general questions of advance or reduction in wages that committee has no authority; these are only dealt with by the two contracting parties themselves; that is, the representatives of the miners, on the one hand, and the general body of associated owners, on the other.

Chairman—continued.

7839. In regard to the joint committee, is there a presiding chairman?—The presiding chairman, as a matter of courtesy, is the chairman of the Owners' Association, but he has no casting vote. He merely sits for the purpose of regulating the proceedings.

7840. Have you any sliding scale?—No, we have not.

7841. Have you had one?—No, we have not, not within my time. There have been attempts made to establish one, but they have not been successful.

7842. About what are the present average earnings of colliers in your district?—I should put the average at about 8*s*. 6*d*. a day; of course that is a mean figure; there would be higher and lower.

7843. Is it expressed in a certain rate to which certain per-centages varying with the state of trade are added?—That 8*s*. 6*d*. would be the average of the day with the per-centages on.

7844. That I quite understand; but what I meant to ask was, were the rates that produced the average of 8*s*. 6*d*., rates expressed in the form of so much per ton plus certain per-centages?—Yes, it is the standard rate plus 40 per cent.

7845. The standard rate of what period?—As you remember wages rose rapidly in the time of the coal famine in 1872, and then they fell back again until they arrived at the point they were at before the coal famine.

7846. It is the standard rate of 1879?—Yes, it is about the standard rate of 1879.

7847. To which, at the present time, there is added about 40 per cent.?—Yes, at one or two collieries that may not be quite accurate; but generally that is the case.

7848. Do the men employed in the collieries in your district have free houses or any contribution towards house rent?—No. In Yorkshire the practice is to pay the gross wage whatever it is, and for the collier to pay his own house rent.

Chairman—continued.

7849. As to coal?—As to coal the practice varies at different collieries. At some, coal is given, at others it is sold at a nominal rate, which practically represents the cost of cartage to the men. At others, again, there is a small sum charged in addition to the cartage.

7850. What are the average hours of the collier from bank to bank?—I got that out as carefully as I could, in order to make a return to the Board of Trade and also to your Commission, and the average hours from bank to bank are eight.

7851. That is from bank to bank?—Yes, it is eight hours and eight minutes really.

7852. And what are the average hours of the other underground men?—Other underground men vary from the lowest I would put at eight up to the longest, say, at ten. And you would find that about nine hours was a fair average to take for underground labour.

7853. Other than the hewer?—Other than the hewer and his trammer or filler.

7854. What are the class of men who would be down 10 hours?—The men who attend to the roadway, and men of that class.

7855. You have spoken of official relationships existing between your association (the Owners' Association) and the Miners' Union, both by means of the joint committee that deals with local questions, and by whom general wages questions are discussed; is it to be inferred from that that representative delegates are treated in the same manner as any other men?—I know of no instances where the contrary has been the case.

7856. Do you find that the members of the Miners' Association work side by side with those who are not such?—At some of the collieries there has been a difficulty with regard to that of late. The union men, in some cases, have objected to ride in the same cages with non-union men: that is, to descend the pit in the same draw with non-union men.

7857. Has this state of things become acute?—Not in the case of any colliery connected with the association.

7858. What strikes or locks-out have there been in connexion with your association during the past 10 years?—In 1881 we had a strike for one month for an advance; result, no advance. In 1882 we had a strike for a week, when an advance of 10 per cent. was granted. In 1883 there was a strike of a week again for a further advance; no advance granted. In 1885 there was a strike for nine weeks against a reduction; the result being that the advance of 10 per cent. granted in 1882 was taken off. In 1888 there was a strike for about 10 days, with the result that wages were advanced 10 per cent.

7859. Was that the amount claimed?—That was the amount claimed. In 1890 there was a strike for a week; the result was an advance of 10 per cent. again.

7860. Was that the amount claimed in that case?—Yes, the amount claimed. But, as a matter of fact, the 10 per cent. was granted in two fives at different periods.

Chairman—continued.

7861. Were most of those six strikes general throughout the colliery district?—Yes; to a great extent. There were some collieries that worked, but the bulk of the collieries were shut down.

7862. Were these strikes—at any rate, the recent ones—preceded by negotiations between the Owners' Association and the Miners' Association to which you made reference?—Yes; in nearly all cases there were negotiations. In one case there was a refusal to meet the men; and I think it was admitted afterwards on all sides that that was a mistake, and that the meeting should have taken place.

7863. At which of these strikes?—It was one of the latter ones—the strike of 1888.

7864. Can you suggest any means of avoiding or arranging strikes or promoting more cordial relations?—That is a very difficult matter. I think that a sliding scale on a fair basis and arranged on equitable terms provides, undoubtedly, the best means of avoiding strikes. But I am bound to say I cannot agree with the evidence that I have heard to-day, that compulsory arbitration provides a means for avoiding strikes. I think that arbitration to be effective at all must be arbitration in which both parties thoroughly agree, and that the difficulties of the situation are such that you cannot by any means that can be devised, that I can see, compel the acceptance of an award by either of the two contracting parties. Both must concur in the arbitration to begin with. I think that both must concur in the selection of the umpire to whom they refer the dispute, and it is the fact that he is satisfactory to both parties and beyond suspicion that makes both parties concur in his award when it is given.

7865. Has the question of establishing a sliding scale been mooted in your district?—Yes, it has on one or two occasions. Many years ago there was an attempt to establish a sliding scale, and on that occasion, if I remember right, we got within something like 2*d.* a ton in fixing the basis price, but negotiations dragged on and it fell through. Then in more recent years, in the autumn of 1885, there was an attempt made to establish a board of conciliation, which should regulate wages both for the district and locally, but without a sliding scale. That fell through owing to some of the owners being of opinion that it would not work unless it was accompanied by an equitable sliding scale to be agreed on beforehand. The result was that it fell through, in my judgment, to the loss of the district.

7866. Have there not been, during the past two years or so, any overtures from either party to the other for the establishment of a sliding scale?—There have been overtures (not made direct) to authorise the establishing a sliding scale. But in our district, I think I am not saying too much, when I say that, as a whole, the men are averse to a sliding scale. I do not want to misrepresent them. They were strongly in favour in 1885 of a board of conciliation, with an ascertained basis price to start with; but they were not in favour of fixing the rate of slide.

Chairman—continued.

It was on that point that the negotiations fell through.

7867. And that is, of course, an essential part of a sliding scale?—Yes.

7868. Have you or has your association given special consideration to the suggestion for a compulsory working day of eight hours from bank to bank?—I think myself that the effect of it of necessity must be to reduce the output. I have heard it stated and stated strongly, that that would not be the case; but I have not been able to follow the arguments adduced in support of that proposition, for this reason, that at present, as appears from the return, the hewers work about eight hours a day, but other classes of labour work on an average nine. If, therefore, you reduce those other classes of labour by one hour, and bring them to eight, you must of necessity sacrifice to a certain extent the useful drawing effect of the pit for the day. In other words, to my mind, the solution of the problem, as to whether it would result in the restriction of output or not depends on whether the drawing power of the pit for the day would be affected or whether it would not.

7869. Was your association a party to certain conferences which took place in London on 21st January and the 11th February last?—Yes, Mr. Maskell Peace and myself acted as joint secretaries for the owners during these conferences.

7870. Do you propose to put in the official memoranda that were exchanged between the parties?—I think it would be useful to do so; because at those conferences, for there were two, one on the 21st January and another on the 11th February, the men put in their case in the shape of a written statement, and that case set out the demand they made, and the reasons they adduced in support of it. The owners took time to consider, and, at the meeting on the 11th February, they on their part put in their reply to that statement, in which they adduced the reasons which appeared to them to negative the arguments that were put forward by the men. (*See Appendix* 16.)

7871. Those two documents then may be deemed to represent the views of both parties?—Of the two parties at that time, the districts that were represented at that conference were the various districts of England, with the exception of the North of England and with the exception of South Wales. I am not quite correct there. I was thinking of our own side of the case, and the reply is so far accurate, but Mr. Chambers reminds me that on the part of the men, representatives were present from South Wales and also from Scotland; but there were not representatives from those districts on our side.

7872. You referred a few minutes ago to a return that you had, I think, prepared for the Board of Trade?—That was a return prepared subsequent to these conferences, if I remember right.

7873. You did prepare a return for the Board of Trade?—I did.

7874. Are you prepared to place that at our disposal?—Certainly. I will hand it in now.

Chairman—continued.

You will find the hours summarised and included in that return.

7875. What does that return show to be the hours in the South Yorkshire district?—About what I have told you.

7876. Eight hours eight minutes—something like that?—Yes.

7877. Does there exist in your district any system of contracting out of the Employers' Liability Act?—No, not at all. There are various forms of insurance, and there is a Miners' Permanent Relief Fund, which has a large membership, and out of which any person is entitled to be compensated for injury by accident.

7878-9. Is that an association which Mr. Campbell is likely to speak to?—Mr. Chambers is, (Mr. *Chambers.*) And Mr. Campbell also. (*The Witness.*) None of those modes of insurance, whether by membership in the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund, or by membership of the local sick society existing at the colliery, or accident club existing at the colliery, impose any disability on a person injured from recovering compensation under the Act.

7880. Is there any other point on which you desire to offer evidence?—Not unless the Commission desire to ask for any further information on these questions that I have put in.

Mr. *Fowler.*

7881. You say the average rate of wages is 8*s.* 6*d.* a day?—Yes.

7882. How many days a week does a man work, on an average?—That is a very difficult sum to arrive at; that is, to apply to the whole district, because it varies at different collieries; but I think that you might take something like five days a week as an average.

7883. That would give 2*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* a week as the average of wages?—Yes.

7884. And that would imply a whole day's holiday on Saturday?—Monday is generally the day when there are fewest men at work. The men go down to their work in the morning, and they stay for about the time of their ordinary shift, and they begin to come out. Two o'clock is supposed to be the time, but, as a matter of fact, men begin to come out before that; some a little later; and in arriving at that average I have given you, it will be necessary to bear in mind that some men would work longer than eight hours and some less.

7885. Then, practically, in your district you have eight hours?—For the hewers, to all intents and purposes, that is so, if you take the average.

7886. Is there not a very general feeling among the miners in South Yorkshire for a legislative eight hours?—I am bound to say that the leaders of the men appear to be unanimous in favour of it.

7887. Are not the men unanimous?—I have no means of telling that. I can tell you this: I have not heard any expressions of opinion to the contrary from the men.

Mr. *Fowler*—continued.

7888. We can apply another test: Is it not rather notorious that it is a test question electorally in South Yorkshire?—It is.

7889. That nobody has a chance there unless he is prepared to vote for the eight hours?—No, I do not think he would have.

7890. How do you explain that strong feeling for legislative interference in South Yorkshire, if practically they have the eight hours for the hewers, and there is only, as I understand you, a very small addition for the other men?—The demand for the eight hours, as set forth in the men's manifesto, which I have handed in, is not an eight hours day for the hewers, but an eight hours day for all who ride the rope; that is, for all who go down the pit, of whatever class. Now I can only judge as to the reason why they ask it from the reasons that they set forth in their statement, and those reasons are these: They say first that the hours are too long, and that the nature of the work is laborious and exhaustive; that there are more men killed and permanently disabled in that trade than in any other; that shortening the hours would exhaust the men less, and would render them better fitted to carry out their work; and would ensure on that ground greater safety to the men. That is shortly the way in which they put it.

7891. Assume that there was a legislative eight hours day, applying to all men underground, how much would that reduce on an average the labour of the man who is hewing the coal?—It would reduce his labour on the average; it would bring him to less than eight.

7892. My question is, how much?—It would be difficult to say under those circumstances, because, of course, then if you had a fixed limit of eight hours, you would have the strongest possible efforts made to make both classes of labour run together as far as you could, and so it would not be quite fair to argue proportionately from the present difference.

7893. Would that result in the reduction of the hours of the hewer?—It would follow as a matter of course, but it would not arise from that in the first instance. It would arise from this. That whereas at present your pit winds nine or ten hours to draw out the produce of eight hours of hewing, if you reduce the hours of winding, you, of necessity, reduce the power of the pit to wind, and therefore the hewer will have to go short.

7894. As I understood you just now to say, it would be so small an amount of difference that you could hardly tell?—I did not quite say that. I certainly did not intend to say it. I said it would be very difficult to say what the exact difference would be, because there would be an endeavour on all sides to keep to the new conditions, and lessen check of production.

7895. Would there be improved methods of drawing?—No. In most of our large collieries. I do not think that that would meet it. It is not so much a question of drawing; it is the question of getting the material to the pit bottom with regularity, as it is wanted, to draw. Take the case, for instance, of a colliery working by endless rope. The rope travels at the rate of, say, 2½ miles an hour. Now that rope is continually moving up to the pit bottom, and the amount of the output depends upon the means that are devised for bringing all that coal gradually on to that rope, and getting it evenly to the pit bottom just as it is wanted.

7896. And that could not be re-adjusted by means of working in shifts, could it?—If you went in for working in shifts then you would have another difficulty—that working in shifts would, of necessity, either practically halve the output for one shift, or it would mean double the labour in two shifts.

7897. I mean double the labour in two shifts?—There is not the labour.

7898. You could not do it?—No.

7899. You have not sufficient colliers?—No.

7900. Then outside this eight hours' question, the relationship between the coalowner and the miner in your part of the world is evidently very amicable?—Very; and we have not quarrelled with regard to this; we have argued with very good temper so far, and I hope we shall continue to do so.

7901. Taking 10 years' experience, the number of disputes have really been infinitesimal?—No, large, considering the circumstances of the district.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

7902. Does the statement which is published in the proceedings of the joint conference represent the whole of your case, or would you like to add anything to it?—I could add something to it if I sat down with pen and ink. We prepared that under some little pressure, for we had to postpone our meeting. I think it might be strengthened; but it is a fair statement of the principal grounds.

7903. Are there any other points you would like to add to it?—It is rather lengthy, and if you will allow me, I will tell you that in the morning, when I come again.

Mr. *Burt.*

7904. You have a joint committee now, I understand, in Yorkshire?—Yes; we have had it working now for two or three years.

7905. Has it worked satisfactorily?—I think it has been a very great benefit. I think it has prevented disputes that would have ripened into local strikes from coming to a head.

7906. It deals only, I presume, with local disputes?—Strictly local disputes.

7907. Any general question becomes a matter of negotiation between the men's representatives and the whole body of the coalowners?—Yes.

7908. Have you had any cases of refusal on the part of the men to accept the decision of the joint committee. I mean to the extent of coming out on strike and resisting the decision?—No, we have not.

7909. No cases of that kind?—No. In fact, we have only had one case where it has really gone formally to an arbitration. We had one in which your Chairman was appointed as an

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

arbitrator, but after sitting in conference before him there were further conferences again, which resulted in an agreement. We had one which went to arbitration a short time ago, and in that case Mr. Marshall, the Registrar of the County Court of Leeds, was the arbitrator, and the award was accepted by both parties and acted on; and it was a case which was an extremely difficult one to deal with, for it was an arbitration as to what the price should be in starting a new colliery working a new seam in the district.

7910. You had previously made attempts, I believe, to form a joint committee?—Yes, we had. There were meetings between a committee of the owners and a committee of the men, and we went so far as to prepare the fundamental rules which should guide the deliberations of the joint committee to be established; that committee was intended to deal not only with local disputes but with general disputes, but, as I said at the outset, the action of the committee was not endorsed by the coalowners generally in the result, owing to the fact that we did not agree upon the rate of slide.

7911. That was the point on which the negotiations broke up?—That was the rock upon which they split.

7912. You have said that the miners have not free houses, nor, I presume, will there be any allowances in the shape of house rent?—No. We pay the gross wage, and the collier pays his rent the same as an ordinary individual.

7913. Is it usual, or are there cases at all, of a colliery proprietor providing the houses, and the men paying rent to the colliery proprietor?—Yes, there are several of those cases. In fact, where you get a new colliery opened out in what has been an agricultural district, it is almost a matter of necessity that that state of things should arise, because the colliery owner then has to provide houses in order to attract the population to his mine.

7914. Then is it a condition of employment that the workmen shall occupy the houses of the colliery proprietor?—Not to my knowledge; it is not an express condition.

7915. You said, as I understood you, that the average hours were eight and eight minutes from bank to bank?—Yes. I have taken it at eight hours in round figures.

7916. Does that apply entirely to the coal getters and the boys that they employ?—It applies to the coal getters, and it applies to the trammers—with this qualification, that the average for the trammers comes out a few minutes longer than that of the colliers. It would scarcely be correct to call our trammers boys; they are young men, and many of them grown-up men.

7917. Are they employed and paid by the coal hewers?—As a rule they are paid by the coal hewer; but there are some cases where that is not so.

7918. Does the butty system exist in Yorkshire?—No, we have not got it, unless it exists to a limited extent in one or two of the Southern collieries; but for all practical purposes we have not got it.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

7919. So that practically so far as the coal hewers are concerned they have little more than eight hours now in Yorkshire?—That is so.

7920. That applies to the whole district?—Yes. Of course, as I said before, that is an average arrived at. Some of them are beyond that, and some of them a little under it. It is the average of the whole.

7921. Would there be any objection, would the men be interfered with or dismissed, if they left their employ at the end of the eight hours?—No, I do not think so. There is a time fixed before which the men are not expected to come out, except in the case of necessity, for this reason: that when you once start coal winding you want to wind coals as long as you can without break, and you do not want to be drawing odd men out until towards the termination of the shift. But when that period arrives they begin to come out, and come out pretty regularly.

7922. About what is the average time for coal winding in the district?—It varies a little at different collieries, but from nine to ten hours.

7923. Then evidently the coal hewers are allowed to ride as soon as ever they have finished their work, or you could not have the average so low as it is?—Yes, as soon as they have finished. I may explain this: there is one thing that rather helps up that average at many of our collieries; there is a small afternoon shift. We do not work double shifts, but there is a small afternoon shift goes on, and there is just enough of them to fill coal—to get coal ready into the tubs to enable the pit to start winding directly the men are down, so that we begin to wind directly the last man gets down to the bottom. That afternoon shift is a shorter shift than the morning shift.

7924. Apart from the conferences that took place in London to which you have referred, and concerning which you have put in documents, have there been local interviews between the representatives of the miners of Yorkshire and the coalowners on the question of the eight hours?—No, those are the important interviews. There was an application, and then the owners stated they must all consider the question together, and the result was those meetings in London.

Mr. *Abraham*.

7925. Did I understand you to say in answer to Mr. Burt, that every hewer is at liberty to come out of the pit as soon as he finishes his work?—Not as soon as he likes, but as soon as the time arrives which is recognised at the pit as the period for coming out; he is at liberty to come out then.

7926. But supposing he had finished hewing half-an-hour before that time, then he is not allowed to come out until the time of winding, is he?—No, I do not say not until the time of coal winding is up, but until the time arrives which is recognised as the customary time for the men to begin to come out.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

7927. That is, unless in the case of necessity, no man is allowed to come out of the pit until a certain specified time?—No. I will put it in this way: if a man came out from his place at the end of, say, three hours, and came to the pit bottom and wanted to go out, there would have to be a reason assigned for his going out; for instance, if his place had come in or he was ill, or anything of that kind, then he would get a note from the deputy and he would go out at once.

7928. As a rule nobody is allowed to come out until the specified time?—That is so.

7929. Until you have finished winding?—No, I do not say not until they have finished winding. They go on winding coal a bit after the men have come out.

7930. Does that mean eight hours real winding?—It would mean about eight hours before they began to come out; about 2 o'clock is the time or a little earlier in some places.

7931. When would you commence winding in the morning?—The men begin to go down, the first of them, about half-past 5. The time they take in going down depends, of course, upon the local circumstances of the colliery; but, as a rule, directly the last man has got to the pit bottom, and while they are on their way to the work, the winding begins, and the colliery is winding then the accumulated coal that the small afternoon shift has provided.

7932. But, as a rule, what time in the morning do you commence winding coal?—About 6 to half past.

7933. Is it 6 one day and half-past the other?—No, it would vary a little at different collieries.

7934. Then we will take 6 o'clock as the hour; from that hour when would be the specified hour when the men had to come out?—They would begin to come out from half-past 1 to 2 o'clock. But the pit would go on winding until it had wound all the coal that they had got.

7935. Is it half-past 1 or 2 when the first man is allowed to come out and they begin winding?—I could not give you that answer accurately. It depends upon the circumstances of the different collieries; but from half-past 1 to 2 o'clock would be a fairly accurate answer.

7936. If you cannot give an accurate answer to that, you will pardon my asking how it is you can give a specific time of only eight hours winding, or eight hours from bank to bank?—Because I have ascertained from each colliery the time occupied by their colliers from bank to bank over a given period, and, taking these times I have averaged them and arrived at the result. But the time that these colliers occupy in the pit from bank to bank is no guide at all in arriving at the time during which the pit winds.

7937. I quite understand that, but could you give us some of the figures upon which you have based the average time?—I am not sure that I have the details with me; but if I have I will give them to you.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

7938. You know the reason why I ask, because there is such a difference between your statement and what some of the leaders say?—In our district, do you mean?

7939. Yes, in your district?—Unless there is really some accurate means of information it is extremely difficult to give an answer to the question. For instance, if you take this sheet it will give you all the different hours that these different classes of labour work. That is the result of the average altogether. Now a similar sheet to that was sent out to each colliery, and every colliery was asked to fill it up with regard to its own place. I then took all those collieries, and the way I got at the average was this: I added together the total number of hours and divided them by the collieries so as to get at the average. That is not, strictly speaking, the most accurate method of getting at it. The most accurate method of getting at it would be to divide it by the total number of men; but that would be very difficult to do, and, for the present purposes the way I did it is near enough to afford an illustration.

7940. So, taking all factors into account, it is quite possible that a large number of the men in that district are more than eight hours under ground?—I have already said so.

7941. Even the hewers themselves?—Yes. That eight hours and eight minutes, which is the exact figure, is a mean figure—an average. Undoubtedly there are some that are longer than that.

7942. Is there a snap time allowed during the day?—The men take their own snap with them, and get it just as they can, or as they please in the banks.

7943. Do you stop the machinery during the eight hours?—No; when the wheels once begin to turn, they keep turning.

7944. Is that one of the elements of difference between you and the men with regard to the eight hours' shift, as now asked for by the men?—Do you mean, is it a case where we are likely to differ in statistics.

7945. Is the fact that the men ask for snap time to be allowed, one of the elements of difference between you and the men?—Oh, no. The great difference between us and the men is as to the question of principle. They ask for parliamentary interference to limit the hours of labour. It is that great principle that was objected to by the owners. There has never been any negotiation as to the establishment of an eight hour day other than compulsorily.

7946. If the men would open up negotiations with the employers in that district, to have an eight hours day established by conciliatory means—by amicable settlement, and without legislation, do you think that the employers would concede it?—I can only say this: that if a demand of that kind were made, it would be my duty, of course, to submit it to the employers, and they would have to consider it. They never have considered it.

7947. Do you think they would have the same objection then as they have now to legis-

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

lation?—I cannot say; but, speaking for myself, if I were a coalowner I should not.

7948. So, after all, then, the difficulties to be surmounted with respect to an equal production of coal are not very great?—I may be wrong, and I am open to correction, but from my point of view, a very small restriction in the output of coal would have a very serious effect on the trade. The present power of production and the present demand are, undoubtedly, very nearly equal; and, therefore, it would not be safe to say that a small difference in the output would be an insignificant matter; it might be a very serious matter.

7949. Is it the fact that the men ask for eight hours by legislation, or the probability of reducing the out-put, that is the real difficulty in the way of establishing the eight hours?—There are two difficulties. First of all, as a matter of principle, the owners object to a limitation of the hours of adult labour by Act of Parliament, and, secondly, they point out that if that principle were adopted, it would result in a restriction of the output; and, of course, if the adoption of that principle resulted in a restriction of the output, so also would the arriving at the same arrangement by agreement result in a restriction of output.

7950. You do not think, then, that it is the idea that it would be much easier for employers to again extend the hours, if the arrangement were made by employers and workmen themselves, which is the real difficulty?—I gathered from what the men said, that that was a great difficulty in their minds, because at the conference their spokesman said: "In conclusion, "we ask you to concede this day of eight hours in "the following form: namely, that it become a "special rule in every mining inspector's district "that no person shall work underground from "bank to bank more than eight hours in any one "day of 24 hours; and that the same shall be "mutually agreed upon and form part of the "Act of 1870. Unless such is the case it will "be utterly impossible for us to take it, as our "great object is to secure a uniform eight hours "day for the underground toilers in the United "Kingdom."

7951. Then you will admit that in times of depression it will be quite easy to change the hours back to their old position, if they are not settled by legislation?—My opinion is that whether they were settled by legislation or not, in times of depression there would be the greatest possible difficulty in preventing the hours from being extended. For this reason: when you have pits running two or two and a half days a week, as I have seen them running for a month together, and when a man has out of those two or two and a half days to get enough to keep himself and his wife and children, it would have to be a very powerful law indeed, backed up by very severe penalties, that prevented him from putting in as full a day's work as he could; and it is under these circumstances that I see the great difficulty in dealing with it, whether it was established by parliamentary legislation or whether it was established by agreement.

7952. But that is not a difficulty on the part of the employer, but on the part of the men?—It would be a difficulty on the part of the men.

7953. And it is these men who ask for legislation to do away with the difficulty?—They ask for it, but I have not yet been able to follow the argument.

7954. Does the difficulty you alluded to, in bringing the coal out from the face evenly to the bottom of the pit, consist in anything more than the necessity of making an extra double parting or two, where you can lay these coals aside in readiness for the pit if something happened on the rope?—You cannot do that very well; you see ours are all big pits. The output of our collieries will run, as a rule, from 1,000 to 1,400 or 1,500 tons a day; that is a great deal of coal to wind in one shift, and everything has to be up to the mark, and everything running evenly and continuously to enable it to be done.

7955. What is the real difficulty in bringing the coal out evenly?—There is no difficulty in bringing the coal out evenly. All that I meant when I referred to that was this: that the difficulty was not alone in the mere mechanical power of winding; in other words, that if your pit is working underground and bringing its coal up to the pit bottom to something like its full capacity at present, the mere increase of winding power would not relieve you from the difficulty if you shortened the hours of winding.

7956. Is it not possible to increase the powers of bringing the coal from the face out to the bottom of the pit?—As a rule every colliery does its best in that way now, because the greater amount of stuff you can get in a day the less your cost per ton.

7957. What time in 1879 did the last reduction in wages take place in your district?—The last reduction took place before that.

7958. Was there a reduction there in August 1879?—I think not. I can tell you in the morning.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till to-morrow at 11.30 a.m.

FIFTEENTH DAY.

Commission Room, Westminster Hall, Thursday, 10th December 1891.

PRESENT:

Mr. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

The Right Hon. H. H. FOWLER, M.P.
Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. W. ABRAHAM, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Sir W. LEWIS.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.
Mr. E. TROW.
Mr. H. TAIT (Group B.), Mr. M. AUSTIN, and Mr. J. MAWDESLEY (Group C.) also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Secretaries.

Mr. FREDERICK PARKER RHODES re-called and further examined.

Mr. *Abraham*.

7959. In order to clear one point which Mr. Burt asked yesterday, if the men came out at the end of the eight hours would they be prevented or would they be fined for it, and I think you said no?—Yes, I did.

7960. Then supposing the body of the men came out from the working faces to the bottom of the pit half an hour before the usual time of giving up winding coal, what then would happen?—As I said yesterday, it is not the time of winding coal that regulates it, it is the customary time for these hewers to come out that regulates the matter.

7961. Yes, but you give over winding coal for the moment in order to wind the men?—Certainly.

7962. That is done at some specified hour?—Certainly

7963. But before the body of men came out, then, in order to be strictly within the limit of the eight hours, say when they are all down at half-past six, supposing they came back at half-past one, would they be allowed to go up?—In a body?

7964. Yes?—If they did that then of necessity a large number must come out within the time, because they commence going down at one time. There is a certain period of time occupied in lowering, therefore the last man would get in and get to his work half an hour or so later than the first, and therefore they generally begin to come out in the same way, and in that way they are dealt with without any difficulty. The earlier men that get down as they leave their faces and come to the pit bottom go out, and they are followed by those who get down later.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

7965. That is the case now, I suppose, and they congregate in a large number at the bottom of the pit before the time really is up?—Sometimes that will occur; but, as a rule, as they come on to the pit bottom they are got out of the way and out of the pit as quickly as possible. You see it is the object of both parties to spend as little time in that as possible when once they begin to come out.

7966. Supposing the first man that went down at six o'clock in the morning came back at one, would he be allowed to go up?—No, I should say not, if he went in at six and came back at one; I should say then that in all probability he would be asked what was the reason why he had left sooner than usual. But I ought to say this that that would vary to a considerable extent with the customs and regulations of the particular colliery; they are not all quite alike with regard to that.

7967. As a rule, then, men are expected and obliged, unless under extraordinary circumstances, to remain down the full time?—Yes; in fact, the contract rules of most of the collieries contain a stipulation that every man shall give a full fair day's work for a fair day's wage.

7968. That is clear enough. I asked you yesterday whether you could kindly tell us when the last reduction of wages took place, in 1879?—Yes. I am sorry to say that having to rely on the telegraph I have not been able to get you that, but I will get it you with accuracy, and send it to the chairman if that will be sufficient.

7969. Did I understand you aright yesterday to say that you failed to agree upon a basis of a

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

sliding scale?—There were two attempts to deal with a sliding scale; the first was many years ago when the fall in prices took place after the good trade of 1872 and 1873. On that occasion we were agreed in principle as to a sliding scale, but we failed to agree on a basis. In our later negotiations which were in the end of 1885, we did not succeed in agreeing in principle on a sliding scale. The two committees agreed that a board of conciliation would be advisable, and they agreed that it was desirable to fix a starting ascertained price of wages and selling price; but they were not agreed in principle with regard to the adoption of a sliding scale beyond that; in fact, the men objected to it.

7970. When you were agreed upon adopting the principle of a sliding scale and failed to agree upon a basis, in your opinion could not that dispute have been settled if both parties had agreed to refer it to an umpire?—If you ask me my opinion, I think we were both uncommonly obstinate and foolishly so. I think that on that occasion we were so near together that if it had been referred to friendly arbitration we should have had a settlement.

7971. Then you think that the point in dispute between you was capable of being settled by another party?—Undoubtedly. If I remember aright we were within 2*d.* in fixing the basis, and in my view the 2*d.* was neither here nor there as compared with the desirability of establishing some self-acting mode of regulating wages.

7972. And you would be prepared to submit such differences to a third party, if the principle of the sliding scale were agreed upon between you and the men?—As an individual at that time I certainly should. I was not the secretary of the owners at that time, I was simply then acting as one interested in a coal mine myself, and meeting along with the others.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

7973. The statement put forward on behalf of the owners at the joint conference consists of replies, point by point, to the representations of the men?—That is so.

7974. I asked you yesterday whether you wished to add to or amplify that statement, and this morning I desire to ask you some questions with a view to eliciting your opinion on the probable economical effect of the proposed legislation. I see in the account of the proceedings of the conference that Mr. Pickard, on behalf of the men, states it as his opinion that the output would not be diminished by a legal eight hours day; do you know whether the contrary opinion has not sometimes been expressed by the leaders of the men?—I should not like to say that it has.

7975. You have not heard it contended on their behalf that though the output would be probably reduced the price of coal would be in consequence raised, and that that higher price would compensate both the owners and the men for the diminished output?—Yes, I have seen that statement put forward, but I should not like to say that it was put forward by one of the leaders of the men in my own particular district. Certainly I have seen that statement made.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

7976. Have you heard it further contended on behalf of the men that such a change would relieve the districts which are now working short hours from unfair competition?—Yes.

7977. I presume that no such relief could be obtained unless the output were reduced by reducing the hours?—I do not see how it could.

7978. You yourself, at all events, are convinced that, as a matter of fact, the output would be reduced?—Yes. I should like, if you will allow me, perhaps, to qualify that to some extent. When I said that yesterday I was speaking of the immediate effect of such a change, but it is open to great doubt whether that change would be permanent. I think, myself, that what would occur would be this, that at first you would undoubtedly restrict the output, that would be equivalent to a corresponding increase in demand; that would mean a rising price produced by artificial causes; that again undoubtedly would bring capital into a trade which, for the moment, was artificially profitable, and you would have in that way by the opening of fresh pits an increase in output. That would go on until demand and supply were equal, and then bad trade would come again as we have had it before. When that occurred, then, in my judgment, the artificial system would break down. You would have staved off the operation of the natural laws as long as you could, and you would then have a calamitous condition of trade when it would be almost impossible to maintain an artificial restriction which depended for its maintenance on the prevention of a man from doing what he liked with his own labour.

7979. Then I understand that in your view the sequence of events would be this: first of all, output would be reduced?—I think so.

7980. Secondly, prices would rise and wages might rise with them?—Yes.

7981. Next, the demand would be lessened by the rise of price?—Yes.

7982. And at the same time foreign competition would be stimulated?—Yes, and stimulated most in the markets where our power of supply and their power of supply are most nearly balanced.

7983. Now if when that point was reached the high prices could not be maintained a certain number of collieries would, I presume, have to be closed?—Yes. What you would have at first would be this: you would have collieries gradually beginning as demand slackened, to run short time, and that would go on till the doctrine of the survival of the fittest had had time to take effect. But in the meantime you would have every colliery prolonging its existence as long as it could, working,

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

perhaps, two or three days a week, and then, as I say, to my mind would come the great difficulty of maintaining the artificial restriction that you had created.

7984. And would you further add, that supposing you could maintain high prices you would be injuring those industries which depend upon coal, and that that injury would in time react upon the coal trade itself?—Yes. My view is this: that although it would be very pleasant for us to regard the matter from our own point of view, and simply regulate the thing with a view to what it would bring into our own pockets; it is impossible for us to disregard the general public, because although we are a necessity for the general public, and they cannot do without us; still, on the other hand, the consumption by the general public is an equal necessity for us. Experience shows that high prices undoubtedly check demand. I believe that is a proposition which as a matter of logic and of economic law cannot be gainsaid. If, therefore, you raise the price unduly you must, to some extent, sooner or later check the demand for the article for which you are charging the increased figure.

7985. Now how far do you think that we have in this matter to fear the effect of foreign competition? Would foreign competition become very much more acute with a comparatively small rise in price?—Undoubtedly.

7986. By foreign competition I mean competition abroad?—I beg your pardon then, I think I am misunderstanding you; I thought you meant foreign competition in the supply of the article that we produce.

7987. That is exactly what I am speaking of; when I say foreign competition I mean competition with foreigners outside of this country altogether?—For instance, take the supply of coal, say, to a market like Hamburg; you are asking whether the state of things that has been indicated would injuriously affect us in that market or not.

7988. Precisely, whether an artificial rise in price would increase the competition of foreign coal with our own coal?—I think it would. It would increase it in this way, that it would diminish our ability to contend with the competition from abroad.

7989. Now could you put before the Commission any figures enabling us to estimate what the danger of this foreign competition is?—I noticed in "The Times" of the day before yesterday a letter from Mr. Nixon in answer to a paper read by a very great authority on economic matters, and that is Professor Munro. I have been endeavouring to ascertain what it was that Professor Munro said that called forth that reply, and I am informed that in the paper to which that letter refers Professor Munro stated that during the first six months of the present year the exports of coal to foreign markets such as France and the North of Germany had increased by a given per-centage. If you take a figure of that kind and rely upon that in order to ascertain what would take place, you are relying on a fallacious basis. Per-centages, when applied to a single figure, are always more or less fallacious. In order to ascertain what the true state of things is, you want not only the increase in the per-centage of shipments from here to the foreign markets, but you want the increase in the supply of the home countries into those markets. Now I have not been able to get in the interval since yesterday the figures for the last two or three years, but I shall be very much surprised indeed to find that the last two or three years have reversed what has been going on for many years before that. For a long period the German coal and the North of France coal have been gradually forging ahead of ours in the race for the supply of the markets in which we compete. I do not say that it is pushing ours out, but the rate of supply is growing much faster from their home markets to those markets than the rate of supply is growing from us to those markets. The Commission, I think, will have no difficulty in getting authoritative evidence as to those facts, and I think they are very important facts to ascertain. They were dealt with some little time ago, and I think I can give the Commission some figures now. For instance, take Hamburg and the Westphalian coalfield; in 1879 the supply to Hamburg from the Westphalian coalfield was, in round figures, 310,000 tons. In 1888 that had increased, in round figures, to 627,000 tons; while in the same period the imports from England increased from 936,000 tons in 1879 to 1,500,000 tons in 1888. Now if you take the two per-centages and compare them, there you will see that in that period the Westphalian coal had increased its supply at the rate of 100 per cent., while the English coal had increased its supply at the rate of 50 per cent. In other words, although we were still running in the race we were slowly falling behind as the race went on. The same observation applies, if you take other figures and compare them with other ports in which both we and the German coals compete. I have not the figures before me since 1888, but I shall be very much surprised indeed to find that what had been going on for many years before that date has suddenly altered, and that during a time of rising prices we have succeeded in reversing that state of things and in increasing our supply.

7990. All the facts being such as you describe them you would, I suppose, infer that if in England we were artificially to raise the price of coal we should stimulate the application of capital to the coalfields abroad and make this competition which is even now running us hard more severe than it is at present?—I think so. I think so long as the natural laws operate and prices rise in one country from causes which are also affecting another country, the rise in price does not very much affect the course of trade, but if you were to create an artificial rise which was limited in its affect to one country alone and excluded the others from it, you must, of necessity, handicap the country that is artificially restricted.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

7991. Have you any other statistics with regard to our foreign trade in coal—perhaps you could tell us what the total export of coal from this country is?—I could get it for you without any difficulty, but, unfortunately, I have not it to-day. You see I did not know that I should be asked all these questions, and since last night I have not had the opportunity of getting the figures. But you may take this that the export of coal from England is undoubtedly an extremely important part of the trade. For instance, take the case of our own district, the great market for our steam-coal, which is the most valuable coal in the district, is through the ports of Hull and Grimsby, and the other Humber ports. Now that trade has increased enormously within the last 20 years, and it increases slightly every year, and if you were to interfere with that trade to any serious extent—well, you could not do it without injuring those who are dependent on the industry which raises and supplies the coal. It may be open to argument as to whether it is wise that we should send our coal out of the country in the way that we do, but the time for useful argument on that has gone by—we have an enormous population dependent on the trade—the population is growing, the population must be fed, and must live out of the trade that it has created.

7992. In your view the ultimate effect upon the trade generally, including both the owners and the miners, of a legislative eight hours' day would be bad?—I think so.

7993. That is speaking for the industry as a whole?—I think so.

7994. Now I will ask you one or two questions as to the effect of such a measure upon the various districts of the country. As between the different districts of the country would the operation of a uniform eight hours' day affect all districts equally?—No, and to my mind that is one of the great difficulties in its application. Districts vary; they vary in their customs, they vary in their hours of work, and they vary in their modes of work. For instance, compare the north of England and my own district: in the north of England you have the hewers working a much shorter shift than that which is asked for now, and you have the other classes of labour working a longer shift. The hewers are at full liberty to do nothing else except get their coal; the timbering is all done by a separate class of persons who are paid for it. Now in our own district the hewer does his own timbering; it is part of his work; and instead of having a double shift of hewers and a single shift of other men in our district we have a single shift system applied to both. Now I cannot see how it is possible by a Parliamentary enactment to bring those two districts into line without inflicting injury or hardship upon one or the other.

7995. So that the introduction of such a measure as is proposed would disturb the existing balance of economic advantage and disadvantage?—I cannot see how it could be avoided.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

7996. In such a way as to injure some districts and possibly benefit other districts at the expense of the injured districts?—Possibly.

7997. Now do you consider that such a disturbance of the existing economic conditions can properly be described as a relief of those districts which are now working short hours from unfair competition?—No, I think that such a disturbance of the economic conditions of the districts must of necessity to a greater or less extent injuriously affect all districts because the trade of each district has grown up in consequence of the particular economic conditions which exist in it. The north of England trade is carried on in the way that it is done by means of the particular state of circumstances which exists there, and which has produced and given rise to the trade. So also with regard to Lancashire; so also with regard to Yorkshire; and although you might say that you gave relief from unfair competition I am afraid myself that you would give hardship in another way.

7998. In short, you think that a state of things has grown up naturally which it would be unfair now arbitrarily to disturb?—Yes, and extremely difficult. I do not know of anything more difficult than to alter a particular custom, even a trivial one, which has grown up and become part of the life of a district.

7999. I gather from the statement put forward at the Conference by Mr. Pickard that he attaches extreme importance to the question of uniformity. I think he goes so far as to say that unless the eight hours' day was secured by legal action it would not be desirable for the miners in any one district to take it at all. The words are these, "Unless such is the case," that is to say, unless legislative sanction is given to the proposed change, "it would "be utterly impossible for us to take it, as our "great object is to secure a uniform eight hours' "day for the underground toilers in the United "Kingdom"?—Yes, and I quite understood his point; he would not want to inflict injury, for instance, on his own district and his own men or to handicap them unless all other districts were treated alike.

8000. But is that consistent with his other statement that the output would not be diminished?—That last is an assertion only, and it is impossible to argue on an assertion unless you have the reasons for it.

8001. But you do not regard the two statements as consistent?—No, I do not.

8002. In your opinion in view of the disturbance of economical conditions that might arise, is this uniformity a thing so desirable that Parliament ought to be asked to depart from the principles on which it has hitherto acted in order to secure it for adult miners?—Personally, I think that nothing but absolute national necessity would justify Parliament saying to an adult male that he shall not do what he likes and thinks best for himself with his own labour. As an individual I have the strongest possible opinion with regard to it.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

8003. Is it your opinion that elasticity and freedom are what we should aim at rather than uniformity in a matter of this description?—I think so. I think that trades are like men and that in order to get on and to live they must adapt themselves to the varying circumstances that arise from time to time.

8004. Do you think it possible to separate the question of hours from the question of wages?—I have heard that debated a great deal and I have listened very carefully to what has been said with regard to it, but I cannot myself get out of my mind that if you do less work you get less money. I find it so in my own case and I do not see myself how it is possible for anyone to reduce the amount of time that he works without at the same time reducing his remuneration—that is in the long run. I do not know at first whether that would be the case or not for the reasons that we have been discussing. But in the long run my view is that less work means less earning power.

8005. And do you not think it even more important for a man to be able to earn enough to keep his family in comfort than for him to reduce the hours which he now works from ten or nine to eight?—Yes. I put it this way. I think that it is a very grave thing indeed to say to an able-bodied man that he shall not earn if he chooses to do so.

8006. Now, do you think, supposing the economic conditions in any given district were to allow of it that the coal-owners would be averse to granting an eight hours' day?—Do you mean by arrangement?

8007. By arrangement?—That I cannot say, because that question has never yet been discussed by the owners; they have only discussed the demand as it was put forward, and of course with regard to that I am simply here as their mouthpiece speaking upon their mandate.

8008. I am asking the question on the supposition that economical conditions allow of it in any particular district?—If you would not mind I would rather you would not ask me: you see I am here in an official position, and I have no right to bind those behind me by any utterance even if I disclaimed it as an official utterance when I made it.

8009. But would you go so far as to say that you see any reason to prevent the Trades Unions which have dealt so successfully with wage questions from undertaking to deal also with the question of hours?—No, I do not it seems to me to be in the same category as the question of wages.

8010. Now, you referred to a paper which had been read by Professor Munro the other day. If I am not mistaken, one of the views which Professor Munro expressed was that the evidence tended to show that the output was greatest in those districts where the shortest hours were worked?—There I think Mr. Nixon in his letter to the "Times" has hit the defect in the professor's argument. You cannot compare on that single basis of shorter hours. You must also take into account the different conditions and circumstances of work; and, as Mr. Nixon pointed out in his letter, in the North the hewer is free to hew during the whole of the time that he is in his bank except in case of pressing necessity for the purposes of safety. In Yorkshire, for instance, and I believe in Lancashire also, the hewer has to attend to the timbering of his stall, so that a certain amount of his time is taken up in doing that work. In order to arrive at an analysis of the actual earning power per hour of men engaged in different districts, and working different hours, you must get all the circumstances, and get all those tabulated, and ascertain every exact economic fact before you can draw a comparison.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

8011. I gather further from the statement put forward on behalf of the owners that your view would be that the output of a colliery does not depend so much upon the hours of the hewers as upon the hours of those who are engaged in drawing and winding?—Yes, both are equally important.

8012. Both are equally important?—Yes; the hewers to produce, the others to raise.

8013. Therefore you could not by mere consideration of the hours of the hewers estimate what would be the output of a colliery if the hours of winding were reduced?—No, you must take all the conditions into account.

Sir *William Lewis.*

8014. I had not the advantage of hearing you yesterday afternoon. I wish to know whether you can give the committee any information as to how far the workmen avail themselves of the provisions of the 38th General Rule as to the inspection of collieries from time to time?—In our district?

8015. Yes?—They do avail themselves of it in some cases regularly; in others not so regularly. Personally I wish they availed themselves of it even more than they do.

8016. In some collieries they avail themselves of it regularly. In other collieries they do not avail themselves at all, is that it?—That is so, but in our district they do undoubtedly. Where there is reason to think that there is anything that wants investigation there is very often a deputation appointed and the pit inspected.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

8017. I think you said that the hours of labour were for hewers practically eight, and for others from nine to ten in your district of South Yorkshire?—Yes, about nine I think would be the average with us for the latter.

8018. Do you find that that length of time is injurious to the health of the people?—I do not think so. I think you will find in that statement that I handed in which was put forward by the owners that they give statistics there taken from the reports of the Registrar General as to the average mortality in different classes

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

of labour. You will find there, I think, that the reverse of that proposition is shown to be the case.

8019. That being so, would you think it prudent or otherwise to compulsorily restrict the hours of labour?—No, I do not think so. I would say this at once without hesitation, that if it were proved and shown that the hours of labour were such as to injuriously affect health, that would be the most cogent argument in favour of parliamentary interference.

8020. I think I understood you to say you object to what is called compulsory arbitration if there could be such a thing?—Yes.

8021. Would it follow that you would also differ from Mr. White in his suggestion that practically a Government official should appoint an umpire?—I would put it in this way: In the first place, I object strongly to the principle of compulsory arbitration, because it is admitting the right of the State to interfere between employer and employed, and to regulate the conditions of that employment. In the second place, I object to it because the award of a compulsory arbitrator could not in itself by any device be made compulsory. You would be met with the old difficulty that having taken the horse to the water he could please himself whether he drank or not, and that would apply to each side. The only way in which you can have arbitration to my mind is arbitration which is acquiesced in by both parties at the outset and throughout its course.

8022. I think you said that a reduction to eight hours would necessarily decrease the output?—I think it would myself; that is my opinion.

8023. That being so, have you considered what the effect would be upon the cost of production?—No, it is very difficult to get at that, because in order to arrive at the effect on the cost of production, you would have to ascertain exactly what the per-centage of reduction in output would be, and that is a sum which admits of so much argument that it would be very difficult to work it out accurately; but undoubtedly it would increase the cost of production.

8024. Supposing that the output were reduced, the standing charges remaining the same, the cost per ton would be increased more or less?—Certainly.

Mr. *Trow.*

8025. Mr. Balfour only put questions to you with regard to the effect of the eight hours on foreign competition in coal—do you not think it would have an injurious effect upon the home trade?—Undoubtedly it would disturb the balance of power between the respective districts.

8026. Leaving out the question of balance of power we use coal in all our manufactures?—Yes.

8027. And we largely export. If it would injure our export trade in coal would not the increased cost to the manufacturer and to the exporter injure the general trade, and affect not only the coal trade abroad but the trade at home?—I think it would. It has been put in this way: that an increase of 6*d.* or 1*s.* per ton in price would not hurt anybody very much, one way or the other. Well, one is inclined upon first sight to say that it would not, but I do not think that you can get over the operation of the economic law that increase in price undoubtedly tends to check consumption; a slight increase less than a large increase, but undoubtedly it operates.

8028. Then there is another aspect of the question. You said, "If you were selfish and "only thought of yourself and wanted to make "the most profit," would it be in reality a profit to you?—No, as I have pointed out, I think it would be an advantage which would bring retribution in its train after it, and which would be followed by a loss that would more than compensate for the profit.

8029. But would not the immediate result of the eight hours be to reduce the output and increase the cost and to lessen the purchasing power of the money?—Yes; but in what I was saying before I was assuming the case of the other side for a moment—making them a present of their case and assuming that it would result in a benefit to all parties at the present time. As a matter of fact, I do not think that is correct because as against the temporarily increased price you have to set the increased cost.

8030. Then you entirely agree that the result would be injurious to our home trade so far as manufacturers are concerned?—I think so.

Mr. *Austin.*

8031. Do you know the hours of the hewers in the north?—They are given in the return I handed in, which, by-the-by, I called inaccurately a Board of Trade return; it is a Home Office return. They are given for Northumberland at 7·8, for Durham at 7·23, and for the other mines in Durham, Westmoreland, and North Yorkshire at 7·21. I have no knowledge of them personally.

8032. Do you know that the output per man is greater in the north where they work shorter hours than in your district where they work longer hours?—Yes, I should expect to find it so.

8033. What is the cause of that?—One cause of it is that in the north the miner has nothing to do but get coal, while in our district he is charged with the duty of timbering and keeping his packs in order as well. In the north there is a separate class of men who do the timbering and packing and all that kind of thing, except in case of pressing necessity, and therefore the hewer is left free to get, but in our case the hewer sets his packs as a rule. That is not always the case, but as a rule he does, he sets his own timber, he lays his own rails, and keeps his place in order.

8034. If the same conditions were introduced into your district as at present obtain in the

Mr. *Austin*—continued.

north, would the output of coal be as large?—That is an impossibility. If we were to introduce into our district the system that exists in the north the output of coal would be very much larger, but then in order to do it you must double the number of our colliers. You cannot have a better instance of the difficulty in applying a thing of this kind all round than that. You see in the north you have got two shifts of colliers dealt with by one shift of ordinary labour; in our case you have one shift of colliers dealt with by one shift of ordinary labour. Now if you were to attempt to introduce the conditions which exist in the north obviously you would want to double the number of colliers.

8035. As regards the strike of 1885, which lasted nine weeks, could you give an approximate idea of the amount of wages lost to the employés at that time?—The loss was very serious indeed. I think if you were to take the loss in wages during that strike at something like 40,000*l.* a week you would not be over the mark.

8036. How did that strike end?—It ended in the 10 per cent. advance which had been granted two years before being taken off.

8037. Was there any effort made at arbitration during or at the commencement of the strike?—I should not like to charge my memory with that. There were some negotiations between the parties at the time, but I will not be quite certain whether there was an actual offer of arbitration or not. What brought about that strike was this, there was an advance of 10 per cent. in 1883, and just at that time there was a slight rise in price, and then prices fell, and in 1885 they were very low indeed, every colliery was running at a loss, and therefore the 10 per cent. was taken off. That era of low prices prevailed for some years after that.

Mr. *Tait.*

8038. You have said that you believe that organisation on the side of the employers and workmen is the best means of settling all disputes between them?—I think that the more you get the two parties into a condition to negotiate sensibly together the more likely you are to avoid dispute.

8039. And the fact of these organisations being perfect is best calculated to bring about all the reforms necessary?—Yes, I think so, and I think it has this effect with regard to strikes: I think that where you have got two organisations face to face, and each powerful ones, the tendency is, when a strike does occur, to make it more severe, because both parties are better prepared with the necessary munitions of war, and able to fight more fiercely. But it undoubtedly has this tendency, that neither side is willing to enter into a strike if it can possibly be avoided.

8040. Now in giving us the working hours as being eight hours and eight minutes per day, in making up that table did it include the working of boys in your collieries?—No, that has nothing to do with that; that was the hours of labour of the hewers only.

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

8041. The hewers only?—Yes. I want to be quite clear; I do not want, when I get home, for it to be said that I have been misrepresenting anything. As I said yesterday, that eight hours is arrived at by taking the case of those who work longer than that and of those who work a little bit less; it is a mean figure.

Mr. *Dale.*

8042. It is a mean figure, I think you said, arrived at by dividing by establishments?—Yes.

8043. And not by men?—No, not by men. I could not very well get at the men to deal with it in that way.

Mr. *Tait.*

8044. Now can you give us an idea of the maximum hours of work?—I seem to have got among my notes here—I am not perfectly certain that it is correct—nine and a quarter as about the outside figure for hewers.

8045. Nine and a quarter is the maximum?—Yes.

8046. One of the arguments put forward by you as against State interference was that many small employers, or many employers, would require to go to the wall, owing to the doctrine of the survival of the fittest?—Yes. The way in which I put that was this: that assuming for the moment you created an enhanced price, you would bring capital into the trade, and in that way gradually increase production, and then, when supply and demand were equal, the doctrine of the survival of the fittest would come into effect; you would have bad trade, and either some collieries would go out of work or all would continue working very short time indeed, until gradually the demand caught the supply again.

8047. The same argument can be applied at the present time; it has been stated—I do not know whether it is correct or not—that there has been an artificial value put on coal by the combination of employers?—I am no believer myself in the possibility of a combination putting on and maintaining an artificial value. My view is that it is the consumer in the long run who fixes the price. If you have got a demand for a thousand and one tons of coal, and only a thousand to sell, that one ton will raise the price of all the thousand undoubtedly. On the other hand, if you have got one ton less, and you begin to see yourself short, then, combination or no combination, gradually prices begin to creep down, and you cannot help it. It is the higgling of the market, as it is called, in the long run that settles the price. Of course, combination for a time might stave off the evil day, and might maintain artificially a higher rate of value than the true rate of value, but it cannot in the long run. You cannot create a corner that is permanent; you may corner coal, or corner wheat, or anything else for a time, but sooner or later the productive power will beat you if you wait long enough.

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Mr. *Tait*—continued.

8048. Yes, but the fact remains that there have been attempts made with a view of artificially raising the price of coal, the same as there have been in other cases?—No, I do not think that. There have been attempts, and I think very wisely, by meetings among owners to ascertain what the true price was, and to prevent needless under-bidding of one another and the like, but I do not think there has been what you would call an artificial rise of price, I believe the price has risen simply because the demand rose.

8049. May I ask you whether in the collieries of Yorkshire, when the price of coal has to be raised, it is done by a meeting of the employers?—What generally takes place is that at the time of the year when the great contracts are coming out owners will meet together and will endeavour to settle upon what is a fair price having regard to the circumstances of the trade.

8050. Now, will you give us the basis of your statement that it naturally followed that if a man worked less he would get less wages?—It seems to me to be an economic law that cannot very well be gainsaid. If I exert my full mental and bodily powers for eight hours and receive in return a given sum, it seems to me to follow as a natural result, that if I only exert them for seven, other things being equal, I must earn less.

8051. You heard the evidence given here yesterday by, I think, Mr. White; he said—and he has a very lengthened experience of 39 years in colliery works—that the miners to-day were working less and were getting more wages?—I agree with him, but if you put it as a case of cause and effect then I disagree entirely. As a fact it is correct; but that it results from the working of the shorter hours I should not say is correct. To some extent that may be the case. I admit that if a man is working so many hours a day that his strength is overtaxed, and you reduce his hours of labour undoubtedly he will get more per hour in the shorter time than he would in the longer.

8052. Can you name to me a trade where during these last 20 years they have had their hours reduced, and are working at less wages than when they were working longer hours?—No, I should not like to do so; but, as I pointed out before, it is a confusion of terms to put that as a case of cause and effect. Every class of industry in the country has improved during the last 20 years. All of us earn more than we did 20 years ago. The reason is, as I take it, the greater prosperity of the country, the greater increase in capital, and, therefore, the higher remuneration, and also coupled with that there is another important element which must not be lost sight of, and that is the depreciation in the value of money.

8053. You have just one suggestion to make to prevent these disputes between employers and workmen, namely, that there should be a better understanding between these bodies through their various organisations, and you think that by direct conference and boards of conciliation strikes regarding hours and wages would be considerably minimised if such were the case?—I think so.

Mr. *Tait*—continued.

Mr. *Burt.*

8054. I would like to put a question or two to clear up one or two points. In answer to Mr. Austin when you referred to the comparative produce in one district and another, was the basis the number of coal hewers or the total number of persons employed?—I think the true answer to that is the total number of persons employed; in other words, the total present productive power of the district under its present conditions.

8055. Then in that case how does the reason that you assigned operate, namely, that in Northumberland as compared with other districts the hewer is employed all his time in getting coal?—I think the two things are perfectly consistent. In the north you have the hewer engaged in getting coal by a double shift, and his material dealt with by a single shift. In Yorkshire you have the hewer engaged in getting coal and in attending to his working place as well and his produce dealt with by a single shift. Now it is the sum total of the advantages of each particular district which determines the productive power of the district. It would not be fair to compare the hewer alone in the north with the hewer in Yorkshire; you must compare the circumstances under which each man works.

8056. Coming to another point on the question of foreign competition, your answer to Mr. Balfour, I presume, was based on the assumption that other things remain equal?—Certainly.

8057. If by international arrangement or otherwise the hours in other countries, which are now longer than they are here—— ?—Yes.

8058. Were reduced to eight, then that argument would disappear?—Yes; if you did that throughout the world then you would only have left one element to contend with, and that would be the effect on general consumption of any possible general increase in the cost of the article; you would eliminate, then, the argument as between different countries.

8059. It would be an argument, I assume, against our taking the lead and making the hours shorter in this country that they are already less here than they are abroad?—A very strong one, and I cannot emphasize that more than by again alluding to a matter that I alluded to before, and which I think is well worth the attention of your Commission, and that is to ascertain exactly what is the total amount of exports to what I would call the neutral ports which are supplied by us and by foreign countries as well and what the total of those has been over a series of years, and also what the total of imports into those ports from their own countries has been over a series of years. If you get that you will see, I think then that over a large part of the markets of the world

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

the thing is very evenly balanced, and that it is a very little matter one way or the other which would turn the scale in favour of us or in favour of the foreign producer.

Sir *William Lewis.*

8060. But is it not possible, even assuming the eight hours were applied on the continent as well as here, that the introduction of the eight hours here might mean to us a much larger difference than on the continent?—Possibly.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

8061. I put to you this case, assuming, for instance, that on the continent the average cost of putting coal on the pit bank is 6*s.* but the average cost here, we will say, is 7*s.*, 10 per cent. on the one is one figure, 10 per cent. on the other is another figure, so that we may suffer more by the introduction of the eight hours than even they would on the continent?—That is so. I had for the moment in answer to Mr. Burt lost sight of that result.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. Arthur Marshall Chambers called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

8062. You are the managing director of the firm of Newton, Chambers & Co., Limited, of the Thorncliffe Iron Works and Collieries, South Yorkshire?—I am.

8063. Are you also the president of the Mining Association of Great Britain, and did you fill that office last year also?—That is so; but I wish to say that I do not appear on behalf of the Mining Association of Great Britain. I simply appear for the South Yorkshire Coal Owners' Association.

8064. Does your firm produce about a million tons of coal per annum?—Yes.

8065. You have heard the evidence given by Mr. Parker Rhodes as secretary of the South Yorkshire Coal Owners' Association, on whose behalf you yourself appear also, and of which Association your firm are members. Are there any points on which you disagree with him?—I think not. I generally agree with his evidence.

8066. There are probably points on which you would desire to supplement his evidence?—Yes.

8067. Would you kindly proceed to do so?—With respect to the eight hours' question, I may say that our collieries furnish an instance in which any enactment of a legal eight hours' day would differently affect different pits. For instance, we have several pits by which the men are let down by winding engines in the ordinary manner; and we have other pits which are driven from the day, by what are called day drifts or day holes, where the men walk down. The distance which they have to travel underground in the one case is much greater than in the other, although the distance from their own homes to their places of work may not be any further. So that, with respect to those collieries where the men have to walk from the day underground, the eight hours' would have a very much more serious affect than it would have in those pits in which they are let down by winding engines.

8068. You mean that if there were a perpendicular shaft sunk at the point or near the point where the men would get to work they would be walking on the surface to that shaft, instead of as at present walking underground?—That is so; and that is the case with regard to a considerable number of collieries in the district, showing how unequally such an arrangement would apply. As a matter of fact, in the collieries where we let the men down by means of the winding engine, they are in from surface to surface a less time than they are in those collieries where they have to walk. It may be said, with regard to those in which they have to walk from the surface, that they are really less liable to accident than they are in the collieries where the means of ingress and egress is by the winding engine. These different circumstances mean that it would put many of the collieries of that class at a very great disadvantage.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

8069. Before leaving that point, will you tell us how the present regulations of hours apply to the collier who descends a shaft, or to the collier who enters a drift mouth?—In what way?

8070. Does each enter the earth at the same time?—No, in the case of men who walk down the drifts they usually, if they go at the same time, return perhaps half an hour or an hour later than the men who are let down by the winding shift.

8071. The time of each class is not the same reckoned in the case of the man who descends the shaft from the time he proceeds to do so and reckoned in the case of the man who enters the drift mouth from the time he does so enter it?—No, it is not the same.

8072. It is longer in the latter case?—It is longer in the latter case. Then with regard to the effect of the eight hours upon the method of working which is prevalent in the Midland and Yorkshire districts, at all events in the South Yorkshire district, the fact is that the off-hand workers—the day men—are employed from nine to ten hours underground. The effect of a compulsory eight hours would be that those men would have to come out at the end of eight hours, and the hewers would have their time reduced to probably seven, and a considerable decrease of output would ensue. Then another effect would be this: in that district most of the coal is worked on the long wall system, and

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

in the long wall system the whole of the men employed in the face are responsible more or less for the timbering, and the packing and for any sudden difficulty that may arise. Possibly after they have been working six hours what is known technically as a weight may come on. In that case if the men were required to return to the surface just to make up their exact eight hours there might possibly be a fall of roof, an interference with the faces and a stoppage of the ventilation; and therefore the operation of any compulsory time would lead to more danger and to considerably more expense in working the coal.

8073. May I understand that that implies that at present cases are not infrequent when men from some such cause have to remain longer than the ordinary appointed hour?—That is so, and when they go down they do not know in what condition they will find their working places at the end of the shift. The system of working in the Midland district is very different from what exists in the North of England where the pillar and stall system is prevalent.

8074. The force of the point you have just made lies in this, as I understand, that at present whilst there are the ordinary hours which have been described by Mr. Parker Rhodes there is elasticity inasmuch as if any underground conditions, more especially of safety, call for a man to remain a little longer he can and does do so?—That is so.

8075. But that under the other system there would be a hard-and-fast line?—There would be a hard-and-fast line which would be, in my opinion, a source of continual danger and possibly disaster. I quite agree with the evidence of Mr. Rhodes with respect to the effect of the eight hours' system on the decrease in the production of coal, because in most of our large collieries the machinery is employed for from nine to ten hours to its full capacity, and any compulsory eight hours would inevitably lead to a reduction, in my opinion, of from 20 to 25 per cent. I would also point out that the off-hand labour, as a rule, is much less arduous and exacting than that of the miner and the trammer. The men employed on the roads have not to work so hard, and they can work without any inconvenience for the time which is usually established in the district.

8076. It seems more convenient, perhaps, that you should yourself initiate the points on which you desire to supplement Mr. Rhodes' evidence. Will you proceed therefore?—I would say that the system in Yorkshire of paying the hewer by the piece causes him to work to the full extent of his capacity, and I may also say that the men throughout the district are a strong and healthy class of men, and so far as I can judge do not suffer at all from overwork, though undoubtedly they are subject to accidents and to the other conditions of this class of labour.

8077. Are you speaking of the hewers generally?—Yes. They are a very strong and healthy class of men, and I do not think the hours of labour at all interfere with their general

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

health and comfort. I do not think they could possibly increase their output per hour if their time was reduced. For instance, they now work in the face about seven to seven and a half hours, and during that time my experience in seeing them work frequently, and what I have heard, leads me to believe that they work as hard as they possibly can, and that if you cut an hour off their work you will cut an hour off the quantity of coal, a seventh off the quantity of coal which they could produce.

8078. You reduce the effect of their exertions?—Yes. As regards the Employers' Liability Act and the relief funds, we have in our district a branch of the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund, the West Riding of Yorkshire Miners' Permanent Relief Fund, which has been in existence for a considerable number of years. I believe Mr. Campbell, who will follow me, will be able to give more detailed evidence about it, but I have the rules of that fund here, and the last annual report of it, which might afford the Committee some information (*handing in copies of the rules and annual report*). A little over two years ago the miners of our colliery became dissatisfied with the West Riding of Yorkshire Miners' Permanent Relief Fund. We employ about 3,500 hands altogether. I ought to say that the West Riding Fund determined to raise the contributions. The contributions from the men used to be 6*d.* per fortnight, and in consequence of the condition of the funds it was determined to raise that contribution to 8*d.* per fortnight. We from the commencement have contributed 20 per cent. of the contributions of our men, and nearly the whole of our men were in that fund. When the proposal was made to raise the contribution to 8*d.* our men objected to it, and they requested me to form a separate fund for our own collieries. We have formed that separate fund, continuing the contribution at 6*d.* per fortnight, and nearly every man and boy at our collieries is in that fund. We contribute 20 per cent. of the contributions of the men. I have here a copy of the rules of the fund and a copy of the report of our special society submitted to its first annual meeting. I may say that society has been very successful since it was formed. We have now, I think, 3,600 members, and in the two years and a quarter since its formation we have accumulated funds to the amount of over 3,000*l.*

8079. Do you require your men to contract out of the Employers' Liability Act as a condition of your contribution?—We do not, but all of them being in the fund—voluntarily in the fund—receive immediately recompense in case of accident, and we have never had a case hitherto raised under the Employers' Liability Act.

8080. You are, I think, a member of the joint committee of owners and workmen, which meets when required for the settlement of local disputes at the collieries in the district?—That is so.

8081. Will you give us your opinion upon the operations of that committee?—I think that committee has worked very well, so far. It has

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

been the desire both of the owners and of the officials of the miners to get as many questions settled locally as possible. We have tried to avoid the blocking of business which seems to have existed in the county of Durham, by having matters settled, as far as possible, between a deputation from the Yorkshire Miners' Association and the owners or managers of the particular collieries concerned. Very few cases have come before us; in fact, I think three or four will be the outside, and only one has proceeded to the award of an umpire. Mr. Rhodes gave evidence about that yesterday.

8082. What is the character of your relations with the officials of the miners' association?—We are on perfectly friendly terms; we meet them and discuss any question that arises.

8083. Is there any other point on which you desire to supplement Mr. Rhodes' evidence?—I think not, except to say that there is some agitation going on now in the district with reference to the Miners' Union. The members of the Miners' Union are making some endeavour to get all the miners in the district into the Union, and at one or two collieries the question has been raised as to whether those belonging to the Union shall ride in the same cages with the men who do not belong to the Union. I am afraid there may be a little difficulty with regard to that. Hitherto we have not been, ourselves, approached on the subject, but I hear there is some agitation going on with regard to it.

8084. Is there any other point upon which you would like to speak?—I think not.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

8085. Mr. Rhodes has explained to the Committee how a uniform eight hours' day would unequally affect different districts, and your evidence goes to show that it would also very unequally affect different pits?—That is so.

8086. Now, in the case that you mention of two pits, one of which would be much more unfavourably affected by a uniform eight hours' day than the other, would the wages of the miners in the pit unfavourably affected be reduced?—No doubt.

8087. Would the same amount of wages be paid?—They would be paid the same wages per ton, but their earning power would be reduced, and, therefore, their actual weekly wages would be reduced.

8088. So that the effect of a uniform eight hours' Act would be not only unfavourably to prejudice some districts as against others and some collieries as against others, but also some men as against others?—Quite so.

8089. I think you also called attention to the fact that the work done by different classes of men employed in the pits was very different?—Yes.

8090. And that the work of those who are at present employed for nine or ten hours a day was much lighter than the work of the hewers?—As a rule that is so.

8091. So that to establish a uniformity in hours would not be really to establish a uniformity in the amount of work done?—It would not.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

8092. Now with regard to the diminution of output, supposing it to be true as you think, that the output would be diminished by some 20 per cent. that would immediately raise the price?—No doubt.

8093. I presume that that rise of price would tempt capital into the trade as one of its first effects?—Yes, that would be one effect.

8094. If more capital was engaged in the trade it would have to be by the opening of new mines, would it not?—Yes.

8095. Could that capital be applied simply to the development of the existing mines?—It could to some extent.

8096. But in order to keep up the supply practically more mines would have to be opened and more capital expended in doing so?—Yes. With regard to many pits that are now open there are, for instance, seams which are thin which at present are not able to be worked profitably, but which might be opened out if a considerable rise of price took place. That is the same thing really, but it would not mean the expenditure of so large an extra capital as the opening out of a new coalfield.

8097. In any case an additional amount of capital would have to be sunk?—No doubt.

8098. You would also require an additional amount of skilled labour?—That would be so.

8099. Is that skilled labour available at the present time?—It is not.

8100. Would that be an additional difficulty in the way of maintaining the present output?—It would.

Mr. *Burt.*

8101. You stated that the machinery at many of the collieries runs for nine or ten hours?—That is so.

8102. Is that the regular system?—It is.

8103. And is it for the most part those who are engaged in the transit of the coal, the getting out of the coal, who work the nine or ten hours?—That is so.

8104. That will include both boys and men, I presume?—Yes.

8105. And the rolley-way men, and onsetters; do you use the same terms?—We do not use exactly the same terms, but we know what those terms mean; those are the class of men mostly.

8106. They will be engaged between nine and ten hours?—They are engaged between nine and ten hours. The difficulty of the eight hours question would become peculiarly acute with regard to the man whom you call the onsetter, the hanger-on as we call him, because if he has to be there at six o'clock to let all the men down, he is bound to come out at two, so that you would have to have another onsetter ready to take his place for an hour to let the rest of the men out.

8107. He has to be there to see the men down and to see them out again?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

8108. The joint committee that you have established, settles differences or disputes for the whole of South Yorkshire, is that so?—For the whole of the associated collieries.

8109. What would be the total number of persons employed at those collieries?—I think about 20,000 to 25,000, quite that I think; more than that probably.

8110. And it has worked very satisfactorily?—It has worked very satisfactorily; it has not been established very long, I think about two years.

8111. You said that you have thrown no impediments in the way, but you have rather encouraged the settlement of the differences locally?—That is so.

8112. And that to a large extent, I suppose, has relieved the run there would have been on the joint committee if you had not adopted that course?—Yes. I must give credit to the representatives of the men, to the officials of the Union, for using their influence to get those matters locally settled; they have used it very strongly in some cases.

8113. And the managers are empowered to settle locally?—Yes; in fact we do not take any case up until everything has been done to get them to agree.

Mr. *Trow.*

8114. Do you remember the time from 1870 to 1874?—I do.

8115. A large amount of capital was then drafted into the coal trade, was it not?—That is so.

8116. And have you also followed up the period from 1875 to the end of 1879?—Yes.

8117. Then there was the re-action?—There was a very serious reaction, and in 1879 we got into a worse condition than that almost.

8118. A large number of firms ruined and men thrown out of employment?—That is so.

8119. Is it your opinion that the result in the first instance would be something similar to 1873, as regards the drafting in of capital?—I think it would.

8120. And the re-action would be about as serious?—Yes, I think it might be more serious even.

Mr. *Abraham.*

8121. I understand that you represent the same association as Mr. Rhodes?—Yes, that is so.

8122. Briefly, is the objection to the establishment of an eight hours' day really against the establishment of a day of eight hours, or only against its establishment by legislation?—I have no hesitation in giving you my own opinion, which I think is probably shared in by most of the other coal owners. We object to it on principle, and we object to it on the ground of expediency, and because we consider it would largely increase the cost, and do ultimate damage to the trade.

8123. Then you object to it upon both grounds?—Yes.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

8124. Do you agree with Mr. Rhodes as to the rules, necessitating and compelling the men to remain in the colliery during the specified hours of work?—Well, that matter is worked very elastically in our district. We have a certain understanding, and it is generally loyally abided by by the men, and there is no dissatisfaction with respect to it. In some of our pits, as I have already said, the men remain underground longer than eight hours. We have no fixed rule, except that they remain underground a longer period than in others, because they get the amount of work which it is understood they ought to get out, and then they are allowed to leave. There is a general understanding, for instance, at a colliery where the winding of the coal begins at six o'clock, that the men shall not come out before half-past one, but there is no friction in the district with respect to it. If a man wants to come out at any other time, he has to get an order from the official in charge, and then he is allowed to do so.

8125. That is the rule?—Yes.

8126. The men are not allowed to come out except at specified times, unless for some extraordinary cause?—That is so.

8127. Do you anticipate any scarcity of skilled labour for the next few years?—Well, I do not like to prophesy unless I know.

8128. Is there really a scarcity of skilled labour in that district at the present moment?—There is not at the present moment, principally in consequence of the mild winter, I think.

8129. How long is it since there was a scarcity of skilled labour there?—Two or three months ago there was a difficulty in getting colliers, but the mild autumn and winter so far has effected the house coal trade very seriously, and there is not the same scarcity as there was.

8130. So that it does not necessitate a great increase in the demand upon the present scale to keep your skilled men fully employed?—No.

8131. So that the supply of skilled men and the demand for them are pretty equal now?—They are pretty equal at the present time.

Sir *William Lewis.*

8132. Apart from the prejudicial effect it might have on your district as pointed out by Mr. Rhodes in reply to Mr. Balfour's questions, in competing for delivering coal, say at Hamburg, would not a permanent increase in the cost of raising coal in Yorkshire very seriously interfere with the manufacturing industries?—There is no doubt about it. I would like to say with regard to that, that probably an increase in cost would affect south Yorkshire more prejudicially than any other district of the country, because of the long distance we are from the sea-board. Again, the cost of coal in South Yorkshire as compared with the cost of coal in Durham is considerably more; so that any increase, any per centage, would be more seriously felt in South Yorkshire than it would in Durham. I am taking that as an instance, I am not as well acquainted with the cost in South Wales.

Sir *William Lewis*—continued.

8133. A considerable portion of the output in your district is used for manufacturing purposes in the district, is it not?—It is.

8134. And any permanent increase would be a permanent injury to those manufacturing industries?—There is no doubt about it.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

8135. Mr. Rhodes was asked some questions about a comparison instituted by Professor Munro between the various districts; do you remember he said that he must take into account that the nature of the work was different in the two districts, do you agree with that?—Yes, I agree with that, and I would point out that with respect to a very large number of the coal seams of Durham particularly, especially in

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

West Durham, the coal is very much softer and very much easier to get than any of the seams in our district. That is one reason why the men are able to turn out a much larger output per man.

8136. Have you not also to take into consideration the nature of the roof and the floor and the angle at which it lies?—Certainly.

8137. In point of fact, can any reasonable comparison be made without taking all those circumstances into consideration?—Most certainly not. With regard to West Durham there are collieries there where, I believe, men can turn out without difficulty as much as 13 tons a day.

8138. Some of it almost comes out with looking at it?—Yes, it is mere quarry work.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. JOSEPH THOMAS ROBSON called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

8139. You are one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Mines?—Yes.

8140. And you have charge of the South Wales district?—Yes.

8141. How many mines under the Coal Mines Regulation Act are there in the South Wales district?—There are 372 mines of all kinds under the Coal Mines Regulation Act.

8142. In what counties are those situated?—There are 10 in Brecon, 43 in Carmarthen, 309 in Glamorgan, and 10 in Pembroke.

8143. Of the 309 in Glamorganshire, how many are steam-coal collieries?—100.

8144. And of the total number of 372, how many are managed by how many certificated managers?—286 out of the total number are managed by 207 certificated managers.

8145. And the remainder?—The remaining 86 are small mines employing not more than 30 persons under ground and which do not require a certificated manager under the Act.

8146. Do you desire to inform the Commission of the number of inspections that have been made up to the 5th December of this year?—Yes.

8147. Kindly proceed to do so?—Up to the 5th December of the present year one or more underground inspections have been made in 213 out of the 372 mines, and one or more underground inspections have been made in 94 out of the 100 steam coal collieries.

8148. The total number of underground inspections made during the current year is, therefore, how many?—334.

8149. By whom were those made?—30 were made by my assistant Mr. Randall, who died in April; 118 were made by Mr. Gray, the present assistant inspector; 114 by Mr. Sims who succeeded Mr. Randall, and began his duties on the 29th of June; and 72 have been made by myself. I may say with reference to Mr. Gray, that he has been off duty through illness for two months during the present year, and is still off duty on sick leave.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

8150. For what reason were some of those underground inspections made?—About half of them were made in consequence of accidents having occurred in the collieries, but at least 170 were made, not because of any accident occurring at the time, nor of any complaint having been made.

8151. What number of complaints have been received during the present year requiring underground inspection to be made?—14; and I should like to add that not one of those complaints had any reference to the Aberdare or Merthyr district.

8152. Are the inspections usually of the whole mine, or in large mines of a portion?—With some few exceptions, where an inspection may be made of a shaft sinking pit, or a shaft accident, and where an inquest has to be attended soon afterwards, the inspection may be only of that portion of the mine because there would be no time for any further inspection, but in a large majority of cases the underground inspection is of the whole mine, if it is a small one, or of a portion of the mine in a large colliery. Inspection of that portion of the mine would invariably include inspecting the ventilation of the colliery generally; it would include several working places in the colliery up to the face, the extremity: it would include the working roadways, and, as a rule, one or more of the return air-courses.

8153. You desire, I believe, to offer some observations upon the manner in which, so far as it falls within the duties of yourself and your assistants, to put a construction upon General Rule 39 you have done so?—Yes, General Rule 39 runs, "No person not now employed as a coal or iron-"stone getter, shall be allowed to work alone "as a coal or ironstone getter in the face of the "workings, until he has had two years' experi-"ence of such work, under the supervision of "skilled workmen, or unless he shall have been "previously employed for two years, in or about "the face of the workings of a mine." I have

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

always acted consistently with the miners' view as to this matter, that is, that no miner should have a stall given to him until he has had two years' experience as an assistant to a miner working at the face. I may say in my district there are few collieries where miners work singly in stalls, the almost invariable practice being for two men to work together, or one man and one boy. In many collieries more than two persons work together in the same stall. As to the alleged evasion of the rule by managers putting two inexperienced men into a stall, in my opinion there is no general attempt to do so. On the contrary, I think managers have endeavoured to comply with the spirit of the Act in this respect. At the same time I would point out that there is much practical difficulty in this matter, for men may and do go from one pit to another, and occasionally misrepresent the period of their employment. As a general rule I think managers and overmen very soon discover a novice at coal getting, by observing how he works the coal, and how he keeps his working place, and so they prevent any general violation of the rule. I wish further to say, that it is true that an opinion has been expressed by my colleague, Mr. Martin, and myself, that the rule as worded, is capable of being interpreted, so that although an inexperienced man may not work alone at coal getting, two such men may work together. More than this I have never, by anything I have said or written, admitted. Notwithstanding this admission I have persistently endeavoured to advance the opposite view, and have sought to get evidence of a clear case in order to test the matter in a court of law, but so far I have been unsuccessful in this.

8154. I understand you have not given an official interpretation of the Act, or an official sanction to that view which is a construction which you thought might be contended for?—Certainly not. Simply in conversation with miners' agents I have said that it would be difficult to get a conviction, as it might be held to mean that you could put two together, but nothing more; I could not do so.

8155. Is there any other point on which you wish to volunteer evidence?—Probably I might speak as to the observance of the 38th General Rule, which refers to the inspection by the workmen themselves. It is not very generally observed in my district, for which I am sorry. I think it would be a good thing if it were observed. Judging from the number of complaints, or rather the number of notices, sent to me by the managers when anything has been found wrong, when any defect has been found by the workmen's inspector, I find it not taken advantage of so generally as one could wish. However, judging I say by the number of notices required to be sent, which the manager is bound to do in case of a defect, I find that there are remarkably few instances where any neglect or any defect in the workings, or in the ventilation, or in the state of the mine generally are made.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

8156. You are referring to the latter part, I suppose, of Rule 38 which reads, "And if the report"—that is the report of the two persons —"state the existence or apprehended existence "of any danger, the owner, agent, or manager "shall forthwith cause a true copy of the "report to be sent to the inspector of the dis- "trict"?—Yes, that is so. I do not think I have had more than three this year, but I know the inspections are made at a good many collieries; I should say at fully 50 per cent. of the steam coal collieries, and a smaller percentage of the other collieries, the less important ones; so that the proportion of cases where neglect or defects are found is very small indeed.

8157. Have you any other point on which you desire to offer observations?—With your permission, I should like to read the instructions to inspectors, as to the manner in which they are supposed to make their inspections and act generally in their district.

8158. Certainly?—The instructions are issued by the Secretary of State to the inspectors: "The "primary object of the appointment of inspectors "is to promote and enforce the uniform observance "of the legal obligation cast upon owners and "managers of mines, and upon all persons em- "ployed in mines, to carry on their operations "in conformity with the statute. Any irregu- "larity of practice, to the extent that it is "suffered to pass unchecked, takes away the "protection of the statute from those for whom "it was intended, and creates an injustice as "between different mine owners, those who "conduct their mines in accordance with the "law being thus placed at a commercial dis- "advantage as compared with those who dis- "regard it. It is important, however, that it "should be clearly understood, both by the "inspector and by others, what his duty in "this respect is and what it is not. It will be "the duty of the inspector to visit and inspect "a mine—(*a*) on invitation; (*b*) on complaint; "and inasmuch as miners are apt to shrink "from volunteering information for fear of "giving offence to their employers, the inspector "should pay attention even to anonymous com- "plaints, provided that they are not on their "face incredible or unreasonable; and wherever "the information proceeds from a private or "anonymous source he should be careful so "to conduct the inquiry that it shall not point "to his informant or lead to his becoming known; "(*c*) where he has received neither invitation or "complaint, but from information (such as from "time to time cannot fail to come to him in the "course of the regular discharge of his duties) "he has reason to believe that the mine is not "conducted satisfactorily or in accordance with "the statute. In the above cases, (*b*) and (*c*), "the inspector will not send notice of his in- "tended visit if in his judgment it is likely "to frustrate the object of the enquiry. (*d*) In "addition to these inspections, which are im- "perative, and to inspections which the inspector "may take the opportunity of making when he

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

" has to visit a mine for the purpose of trans-
" acting other special business (as inquiring
" into an accident or arranging for the establish-
" ment of special rules) it will be the duty of
" the inspector to devote whatever time he can
" spare to the inspection of those mines where
" he thinks it most likely to be of service, such
" inspection to be both above ground and below
" ground, and without notice. The liability to
" official inspection at any time without warning
" may be a most effective guarantee against
" abuse, and an unexpected visit from an in-
" spector is not the less beneficial because
" he finds nothing of which to complain. The
" inspector therefore should make a point of
" arranging his business and that of the assistant
" inspector with a special view to secure as
" large a time as possible for these casual
" inspections. It is in the confidence that
" inspectors realise and conscientiously dis-
" charge this obligation that the Secretary of
" State has abstained from requiring each in-
" spector to send in a periodical report of the
" business done on each day, but this dispensa-
" tion makes it the more necessary that the
" inspector in drawing up his annual report
" should, for the satisfaction of Parliament and
" the country, state enough to show that this
" most important part of his duties has been
" habitually and effectively carried out. For
" this purpose the inspector will keep a record
" of his visits to all the mines which he inspects,
" and of the result of such inspection. On the
" other hand, the notion that an inspector should
" personally regulate or even superintend the
" mining operations of the mines in his district
" is plainly impracticable, neither is it contem-
" plated by the statute."

8159. Is there any other evidence you desire to volunteer before the other members of the Commission ask you questions?—There is nothing else I have to offer.

Mr. *Burt.*

8160. With regard to the rule of which you gave evidence—rule 39, I think it is—you have not, I understand, any doubt that the spirit and intention of the rule is to prevent inexperienced men from working in the place without being associated with an experienced man?—Yes, I have not the least doubt that that is the intention. That is what, I think, was intended, and that is what I have endeavoured to promote.

8161. Would you not go rather further, and say it would be rather straining the rule to send any two inexperienced men to work together?—I think it would be wrong, and it is not done intentionally. But what I say is, that it may be held by law to be the intention, and it would be difficult for an inspector to enforce it. I have endeavoured to get a case. I have let it be known to mining agents that I would be willing to try it. I have made inquiries personally and by letter, scores of times, to get a clear case where, if I found the manager was purposely trying to

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

evade the spirit of it, at any rate, by putting two inexperienced men together, then I should do my best to prevent it by prosecution, or, at any rate, if I could not succeed, then the country would see that it would not bear that interpretation.

8162. Had you any reason to believe that the rule itself is not acted upon generally, as construed by you?—I think it is acted upon generally in the way that we intend it to be construed; that is to say, that an inexperienced man should not have a place given to him to work in himself, nor should he be put in with another inexperienced man, but he should be put in along with a skilled collier until he is competent, until he has had his two years' experience, and then he should have a place of his own, or could be put in as a skilled man. That is what I think is generally carried out.

8163. You spoke of cases of misrepresentation as to previous employment by a workman?—Yes, I believe that that has been done in one or two cases, where I thought I had got a case. When I have carried on a correspondence and made inquiries, I have found that the managers have been able to satisfy me it was not their intention to evade the Act, but that where they happened to have an incompetent man put in—two men together—it has been found out that one of them has actually misrepresented his experience. He has been so many months at one colliery, and so many months at another colliery, and then he has gone to a third and a fourth, and said, "Yes, I have been a collier more than two years," and so he has got employment in that way as a skilled collier, and got an assistant along with him.

8164. Then a workman so representing himself would be himself violating the Act, and might be punished?—He would do wrong. He has misrepresented himself as a skilled collier when he is not a skilled collier; but, I suppose it is human nature for a man to try to get a place of his own. When he has been a few months at it, he thinks he is competent. Perhaps he has never seen the rule, or heard of it.

8165. If you could get a clear and well established case of a man having secured employment through misrepresentation, would you not act upon the same principle as you would in the case of an employer having violated the Act?—I should do this: I should endeavour to get the owner or the manager to test it with the workmen. I think the onus would be thrown on the manager there, and if he had a clear case, and he would not take those steps, then I should hold him responsible if it happened again. I should say, "You are not endeavour-
" ing to enforce this rule, and, therefore, you
" are winking at it, and I will prosecute you."
That is the course that I should take afterwards. I do not say I would do it in the first instance. But if I saw a manager endeavouring to wink at these things I certainly would prosecute him.

8166. With regard to anonymous complaints, do you receive many?—No, I do not. I may

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

say nearly all the complaints I have got are anonymous, but I do not receive many complaints.

8167. Do you find that they are generally valid and reasonable, or are they frivolous?—They vary. I have had some complaints which have been very proper complaints, and did a lot of good. I have had others which were not well founded. As a rule, I think they have been made when there is something else behind the complaint, some other reason for making the complaint, and for sending for an inspector as they call it. In those cases, although the inspector does not divulge his source of information—does not even say that he has had a complaint—they invariably know when you go to the colliery that there has been a complaint, because of the something else which is behind it.

8168. Would you be of opinion that the power, or rather the instruction, to the inspector with regard to such complaints has operated beneficially?—I think it is a proper course, and it is invariably carried out.

Mr. *Trow.*

8169. Have you ever known men discharged for complaining about the foulness of the mine through gas?—No, I have never known of a case.

8170. Never had any report of any?—No, never.

8171. In case of complaints, it is customary for you to enter the mines and examine them yourself?—Yes, myself, or by one of my assistants, as the work can be arranged.

8172. And it is not the usual custom for you to accept the reports of the office books—reports from the manager—without going in to examine yourself?—Certainly not. But it is the custom to look at them.

8173. There is a charge made here that men have been discharged for complaining of gas, and that the deputy inspector did not go into the mines, but he accepted the report?—There is no truth in the deputy inspector, or any other inspector, not going into the mines if it is necessary that he should go in.

8174. We were also told that it is customary, not merely occasionally, for two inexperienced men to be sent into the mines to work together, and that the interpretation of the Act by your colleagues, and by yourself, I presume is, that that is strictly in accordance with the Act?—It is not customary, and I have certainly never done anything to encourage that view of it, but quite the contrary, as I have stated.

8175. It was stated here by two witnesses that that was your interpretation of the Act, that while one incompetent man could not be put to work, two could; that the Act says "person" not "persons"?—I can only repeat what I have already said in my evidence-in-chief. I have said, and I still say, that that interpretation may be put upon it as it is worded. I have constantly maintained the other view, and endeavoured to get the other view, which is the proper one, accepted and carried out.

Mr. *Trow*—continued.

8176. And you would be prepared in case a report had been made to you of this being adopted to test the question, and see whether it was right?—Yes, I have been most anxious to do so, and I have never got a clear case. It is useless going into court unless you get a clear case.

Mr. *Abraham.*

8177. You may remember the meeting where you yourself and a fellow-inspector were interviewed by a number of miners' agents in South Wales?—Where was the meeting?

8178. At Cardiff?—Yes, about two years ago. I remember now.

8179. You remember that you were asked to meet or to allow these men to meet you at the request of the executive of the miners' federation?—Yes, I recollect that meeting.

8180. Do you recollect also what was the purpose of that meeting; what did they meet you for?—It was on this very rule. It was with a view to see if some means could not be taken to endeavour to carry out the rule; to, as it were, help the managers to ascertain beyond doubt that a man, before he was employed and given a place, was an experienced man. It was to get up some scheme, if I recollect right.

8181. Did not these men meet you at the request of that executive for the sole purpose of discussing with you the best means of asking your aid and co-operation in enforcing this rule in the collieries of South Wales?—Yes, if you put it in that way, that meets the case.

8182. That was so?—Yes, it was rather more than that. It was, if we could suggest any way to help them, with a view to aid the manager getting the information, and they talked, I think, something about giving a man a ticket, showing the length of time he had been employed when he left the colliery; some such scheme as that was proposed.

8183. Was it not the fact, that according to your evidence they were under the impression that this rule was violated, and they came to see you for your aid and co-operation?—No doubt that was their impression, that it was violated.

8184. There were two inspectors, yourself and Mr. Martin?—Yes, they thought the Act was violated, but they could not give us a specific case. We both asked them. I am very clear on that point.

8185. Did they misrepresent you or Mr. Martin in the report that they made that your view of the possibility of the rendering of this rule would be as it is worded here, to frustrate every attempt in prosecuting anyone for a breach of the rule?—Not quite to that extent, but if they represented what I have said that that was one interpretation which might be given to it, then they correctly reported what we said. But if they went further than that then it was a misrepresentation.

8186. Would they misrepresent you when they said—a report which was made publicly—that, in your view, it would be very, very

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

difficult now, if not impossible, to obtain a prosecution under this rule?—Yes, I think I said, and I think my colleague said, that it would be difficult, but we did not say impossible. Although we said it would be difficult, we were both anxious for them to give us a specific case, with a view of having it tested. That was put several times to them, and they could not, or would not, mention any particular place. They did not mention a particular colliery, much less a particular case. They made use of general remarks as to the two districts. They said their opinion was the Act was being violated, and they were anxious to have it put right, and so were we, and had been all along.

8187. You were not under the idea, then, that you were discouraging their efforts to have this rule carried out according to the interpretation that you and your colleague inspector gave upon this rule?—No, I do not think so. I did not think I was discouraging it at all. I think rather the contrary. The more we talked about it, the greater probability there was of our getting it carried out properly. We are all agreed as to what it is intended to mean.

8188. Did you see in the daily press a report of the meeting, where these gentlemen reported the interview they had with you?—I do not remember seeing that. Perhaps, I did; but I have no recollection of having seen it.

8189. Had not that fact been brought to your mind previous to this Commission meeting, that your interpretation of this rule greatly discouraged the deputation that waited upon you?—I never heard of it until I saw the evidence by Mr. David Morgan given before this Commission. That was the first intimation I had since our meeting the deputation of miners' agents that they put that construction upon it; that we had given it an interpretation, as it were, as if we had laid down the law, which was certainly never intended, nor mentioned. It was only thrown out as the probable result of how a court or magistrate would decide or might decide.

8190. Does not Mr. Martin refer to that opinion as given by yourself and him in his last report?—I really do not recollect, I am sure. I have read his report, but I do not recollect.

Mr. *Dale.*

8191. I think the only really important point is this: Whether Mr. Robson and Mr. Martin stated that, in their opinion, to put two or more inexperienced men to work together, not associated with any experienced man, was a course which, in their judgment, was in accordance with Rule 39, and a practice therefore of which they could not take any official cognizance?—No.

8192. You did not hold a view of that kind?—No, and I should be very sorry if anything I said would lead anyone to have taken that view of it. Quite the contrary.

8193. On the contrary, did you give the parties having the interview with you to understand that such a course, that is to say, the putting two or more inexperienced men to work

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

without being associated with an experienced man, was one which, if a specific case was brought under your notice, it would be your duty to take cognizance of, with a view to test the legality of such a procedure?—We did. We were particular to put that before them. It was repeated.

Mr. *Abraham.*

8194. Will you give an illustration of what you have done?—I will give you an illustration. In the case of a young man being injured or killed, that question is inquired into, and I have invariably endeavoured to ascertain who he worked with; the length of his experience; the age and experience of the collier he worked with; and so find out whether it was a case where two inexperienced persons have been working together.

8195. Have the miners' agents been corresponded with since upon this matter?—I have not had any correspondence with the miners' agents. I have had correspondence with colliery managers and owners.

8196. I think you gave it in your evidence that you have since had an interview with more miners' agents?—No.

8197. I thought I understood you to say, that in seeking for these cases, you had sought the assistance of some miner's agents?—No, I did not say so. I do not think I have communicated with any miners' agent. I have had complaints about it, and have investigated those complaints. But, generally, when I say that I have sought for a case, it has been while visiting the collieries, or in cases of accidents having arisen, that I have endeavoured to make use of that as a means of getting to know the experience of a collier, in the case of young men being injured or killed.

8198. It is sufficiently clear now, then, that if your assistance is required in carrying out this rule, you are thoroughly prepared to give that assistance to carry out the rule according to the spirit in which it was passed?—Yes.

8199. And to prevent inexperienced men being given a place to work unless they are under the care of an experienced man?—Most assuredly, and I always have been since the passing of the Act.

8200. I think that your district—the district that we belong to—is in a comparatively very unfavourable position as regards the safety of its workings?—Yes; the death-rate is heavy.

8201. Now, is it your opinion, as far as you can judge, that there are any special physical difficulties in the district to which this disparity, in regard to the point of safety, can be justly attributed?—There are none to which all the disparity can be attributed.

8202. To which some of it can be?—Yes; to some extent it may be accounted for by differences in the district, but not the whole of it That is my conviction at present, at any rate It has been strengthened year by year as I have become more and more acquainted with the district.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

8203. Have you not expressed yourself very strongly on this matter?—Yes.

8204. That there are no special physical difficulties to account for this disparity?—To account for the whole of the disparity.

8205. Then you qualify that statement now to that extent?—I think that is the intention of what I have said.

8206. You did not mean the whole when you said that. I mean according to your own report, of course?—I will qualify it to that extent, if I have said so. I think it is a misprint if it is so. There are no physical difficulties to account for the whole of the disparity, I think. If I do not say so I intended to say so.

8207. It reads thus: Page 5, "So far as I can "judge from observations, there are no special "physical difficulties in the district, as a whole, "to which all this disparity in point of safety can "be attributed"?—Yes, that is it. That carries my meaning—"to which all this disparity." That is precisely what I intended to say.

8208. What portions of the district do you refer to where the physical difficulties do not justify the number of accidents?—In many of the steam coal collieries, where the roofs are just as good as they are in the north of England, or in Scotland, or in the Midlands, they have had a larger number of accidents, and the death-rate has been bigger since I went to the district than it has been in other districts under similar conditions. The seams are comparatively flat and comparatively thick, the roads are high, and, therefore, with fairly good roofs, there ought to be as great an amount of safety in working these mines as there would be in any other district.

8209. How do you account for its not being so, if your report is right?—I must analyse the various accidents before I can tell you to what extent.

8210. It is not a question of extent?—Yes, I am speaking generally.

8211. How do you account for the numerous accidents that happen if there are no physical difficulties in either the whole or a portion of the district?—I cannot account for them. I am pointing out to the owners, to the country, and to everybody that I cannot account for the fact by any difference in the physical difficulties of the collieries, and therefore I am suggesting to them that the precautions taken to prevent accidents in South Wales are not quite so good—that is, not carried out to such an extent—as they are in other districts. When I say precautions I mean precautions taken by everybody—probably not taken, to some extent, to begin with, by owners, agents, managers, down to the colliers and hauliers themselves.

8212. You still maintain your opinion that there is nothing in the physical conditions of the South Wales coalfield to prevent the same kind of precautions being taken there as are taken, say, in Durham?—Certainly I say so. I say there is not much difference physically, and therefore all the rest must be a matter of

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

precaution, I should say, to account for such a difference in the death-rate. I say that if the precautions taken were as good in South Wales as they are in other districts the death-rate, instead of being 50 per cent. heavier, would probably only be 10 per cent. heavier I could not expect it to be reduced to the same degree of safety, because I say that there are some physical differences.

8213. In some portion of the district?—I am speaking of the district as a whole. The district, as a whole, is rather a worse district to work than, say, Durham or Northumberland, because, I think, there you have a larger proportion of really good roofs; a larger proportion of mines not so deep, and a fewer number of fiery collieries. While as to South Wales I do not know any district where there are so many, what we call, fiery collieries; so many seams with bad roofs; so many roofs full of slips. Therefore I say the physical difficulties are greater in South Wales than in other districts, but not to such an extent as to account for the great disparity in the death-rate. I think things ought to be better. That is what I intend, at any rate by this report which you have quoted.

8214. So that you admit now that there are portions of the coalfield there that have greater physical difficulties than other districts have?—Yes, without defining the particular portions. I take the district as a whole.

8215. What is the source from which the great number of accidents occur?—Practically 50 per cent. by falls.

8216. Of roofs and sides?—Yes, chiefly roofs. 75 per cent. of them are falls of roof.

8217. Does not that in itself prove that there are great physical difficulties?—Yes, to some extent; but what I should like to say there is, that in proportion to the number of collieries with good roofs and bad roofs, I find the death-rate is rather worse in the good roofs and middling roofs, simply for want, as I say, of taking all the precautions which can be taken. I will put it in this way: If everybody would look upon a colliery with a good roof or a middling roof as they look upon one with a bad roof, and use the same precautions in one as the other, then I say that the death-rate would be slightly less than it is at present. I am quite clear about that.

8218. Then, in your opinion, it is for the want of real care on the part of everybody concerned, employers and workmen, that these frequent accidents happen?—Oh, not all of them, certainly not. I say the excess of accidents is partly due to that.

8219. Will that account for the excess of accidents?—I believe it would account for a good bit of it.

8220. That is your opinion?—That is my opinion. I mean to say, that an accident often happens where they have all thought it was safe. Everybody thought it was safe, yet the accident happens. That shows that the best man they put in cannot judge that the collier was wrong. Where there is an acknowledged bad roof they

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

prop very closely, but you cannot get them to do it where they think the roof is good.

8221. Does the increase in the number of unskilled persons employed affect this in any way?—Yes, I am satisfied that it has this last two years.

8222. You are satisfied if less unskilled labour were employed, that the accidents would be less proportionately?—That is putting it in a different way. I am satisfied that the large increase in the number of persons employed, which of course must have meant a large increase of inexperienced persons being employed, has led during the past two years to an increase in accidents out of proportion to the persons employed in the district—a greater increase than would have taken place otherwise.

8223. Then you attribute the increase of minor accidents very largely to the increase in the number of unskilled men employed?—I would not go the length of saying very largely, but it is quite perceptible.

8224. Now, taking the condition of that unfortunate district into account, is the staff of inspectors who are led by you, in your opinion, sufficient to do the work of inspection for this important holding?—It all depends upon how far you carry inspection. I think that up to the present time there has been no reason for complaint. But it is a large district, and it is getting larger. I have, I may say, for the past five or six months, been considering the matter very carefully, and I have come to the conclusion that there is work for one more inspector. I think three assistant inspectors could be very usefully employed now, as the district stands.

8225. I suppose that the report you gave here this morning of the inspections made this year, under the circumstances that you have had one of your men laid off, is not a fair criterion of the number of inspections made in other ordinary years?—I think, under different circumstances, there would have been rather more.

8226. I will take the year 1890. From your report we find that, of underground examinations, you yourself made 85, Mr. Randall made 129, and Mr. Gray made 119—a total of 323. Those are all the underground examinations that were made?—Yes, that is so.

8227. That would be so many visits?—Yes.

8228. What time would the inspector actually be underground in making that visit, on an average?—On an average, I should say, from 2½ hours to three hours—three hours probably. That is about my own time, at any rate.

8229. From your knowledge of the district, how many hours would it require to make a thorough investigation and examination of the majority of the collieries in the district?—It would take days to make a thorough examination of every part, if that is what you mean.

8230. So that these 323 examinations, as a rule, would not average more than, say, three hours?—I am speaking without the book there. I really keep no note of it. I am speaking now from my own experience. I do not think I average more than three hours down.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

8231. Put it four hours, if you like?—I do not know, I am sure. I am not prepared to speak to that.

8232. Whether they are three hours or whether they are four hours, they are visits, and this single visit of four hours may be paid to a colliery that would require days to make a thorough examination of?—Yes, that may be.

8233. You have in your district 372 collieries?—That is, all told, big and little.

8234. Between the three of you last year, you were only able to make 323 visits to those collieries?—That is so, 323 underground visits. Of course, there were a number independent of that, and a lot of inquests attended.

8235. I am dealing now exclusively with underground examination?—Underground inspection, yes.

8236. These visits fell short by 49 of the number to enable you to pay one visit to each colliery in the district between the three of you?—Yes, if you put it in that way. At the same time, several of the collieries would be visited three or four times, but a large number would not be visited at all.

8237. And several of the collieries may want days, as you have said, to make an examination of?—Yes.

8238. You would be 49 (it would be a larger number than 49, but I am only putting it on an average) short of being able to pay one visit of three or four hours to all the collieries in South Wales in your district?—Yes, there is no doubt about it.

8239. Knowing that, that strengthens your opinion as to the necessity of further strengthening your staff of inspectors?—Yes. This last year or two the district has been growing, and I felt that I was not physically able to give it all the attention that it ought to have—I mean by working 12 or 13 hours a day I cannot do it, and that is what I have done all the year. I have never had a day's holiday.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

8240. Have you to bear in mind the Home Office instructions to the effect that inspection is not intended instead of management, or to relieve the management from their responsibility?—Yes.

8241. And, consequently, have you simply to satisfy yourself generally that the provisions of the Mines Inspection Act are carried out?—Yes, I have satisfied myself generally.

Mr. *Tait.*

8242. In reply to Mr. Abraham, you stated that you thought that a number of accidents were the result of unskilled persons being engaged in mines?—I said a proportion of the increase during the past year or two, has undoubtedly been caused by the large increase in the employment of unskilled labour.

8243. It has been suggested to the Commission that a system of apprenticeship should be introduced in the mines; do you think that

Mr. *Austin*—continued.

8255. Could you give at a rough guess for the past half-dozen years the number of accidents that have occurred in the mines owing to unskilled labour?—No; I could not give that. I could not even give an approximation to it.

8256. Seeing that the employment of unskilled labour is on the increase in the mines, are not the duties of the inspectors becoming more extensive?—Of course. It has led, as I have said, to an increase in the number of accidents, and that has led to a larger number of investigations, which has left less time for casual investigations. That is all the difference it has made.

8257. Might not there be some of the mines overlooked by the inspectors if the employment of unskilled labour is on the increase?—As, I say, the principal mines have been to some extent inspected, but latterly not quite to the extent that I think is necessary. Still, I hold my view that periodical inspection is not necessary. I do not say that because there are 50 mines that have not been inspected during the year that that is a very wrong thing. There may be nothing happen at those mines. I know several mines where there has not been an accident since I came to the district, and that is nearly five years ago. You might go to the mine, but you would see nothing; it would be just the same as before; no practical difference. It would be absurd to inspect them periodically.

8258. Because an accident does not happen at a mine, does that warrant the argument that there is no necessity to visit it?—Well, you cannot help using that as an argument; because, after all, safety is at the bottom of inspection.

Mr. *Austin*—continued.

It is with a view to increased safety, and surely if you have a colliery or so many collieries that have proved themselves to be safe collieries, and you have had no accident for a period of five years, if you have inspected it once or twice, and you have found nothing to complain about, surely it can answer no good purpose to periodically inspect it. I think the object is gained; the collieries are safe.

8259. As a mines inspector, do you put it forward that because an accident does not occur in a mine for a space of four or five years, there would be no necessity for visiting it?—I do not go the length of saying that. It would be inspected now and then, not periodically, but casually, just as the inspector thinks fit. It might be once or twice a year.

8260. How often do you think it is necessary to visit a mine?—It all depends. I have visited some mines every three or four months myself where I thought it was necessary; but I could not make any general statement applying to the whole of the collieries. It entirely depends upon the individual colliery.

8261. As regards the qualification for mine inspectors, do you think it would be wise and judicious for the Legislature to lower the standard at present, so as to enable working men to be appointed?—No, I do not.

8262. Why?—I think the thing is right as it is. I do not think it would be proper to lower the standard to admit men of a lower grade.

8263. I am speaking from an educational point of view?—A certain amount of education is necessary, but, as I have stated, there are many other things besides education.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. GEORGE LAMB CAMPBELL called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

8264. You are the general secretary of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Permanent Relief Society, and the consulting secretary of the North Wales Permanent Relief Society and the Monmouthshire and South Wales Miners' Permanent Provident Society; you are also secretary of the Central Association for Dealing with Distress caused by Mining Accidents?—I am.

8265. Do you reside at Wigan, in Lancashire, and are you a justice of the peace for that county borough?—I am.

8266. When was the Central Association for Dealing with Distress caused by Mining Accidents formed?—The Central Association for Dealing with Distress caused by Mining Accidents was formed at a conference of authorities of Miners' Permanent Funds and others interested in movements for the relief of distress caused by mining accidents held in Manchester in 1879. There had been a previous conference in 1878, which was a memorable year in its

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

relation to accidents in England, causing great loss of life. From the time of the Oaks accident in Yorkshire, causing the loss of 361 lives in 1866, there had only been two mining disasters, resulting in more than 100 deaths—Ferndale, in South Wales, in 1867, causing 178 deaths, and Swaithe Main, in Yorkshire, in 1875, where 143 persons were killed. There had been a fearful series of explosions in Lancashire, but 75 was the largest number of deaths caused in any one instance, and this was not sufficient to arouse interest which could be described as national. In 1877 the Blantyre accident in Scotland, causing 207 deaths, roughly dispelled the idea that the days of great disasters were over: but that explosion was in a comparatively remote district, and had nothing like the public effect of the experience of the following year, when Haydock, in Lancashire (189 deaths), and Abercarn, in Monmouthshire (268 deaths), in rapid succession were heard at the door of public sympathy. Relatively speaking the Haydock

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

exists in the sense that it collects their membership and their effects.

8271. The funds are not fused?—No.

8272. The Central Association, therefore, is not an association having its own funds and disposing of its own relief?—No. In a further paragraph of my proof are set out the functions of the Central Association. In this connexion it should be remembered that the Societies have grown out of each other, and that in every case the spread of the principles on which the organisations are established, is due to the missionary effort of the forerunners of the work. In every case the principles on which the Associations have been established, have been developed by the missionary effort of the Societies as they have grown. Cross totalling of the tables show that since the formation of the Central Association, and the collation of figures in the form now submitted to the Commission, there has been received from the ordinary members the sum of 1,508,992*l.*, and from colliery owners the sum of 213,190*l.*, the latter being in the proportion to the former of 14·1. This is put wrong. It means that the latter is relatively to the former in the proportion of 14·1 per cent. As an organisation, the Central Association is purely voluntary on the part of the district societies, and makes no pretension to exercise any authority over them. On the question of employers' liability, for example, there is wide divergence of practice, some of the Societies being made the basis of mutual arrangements between masters and men in view of the law, while with others the mere mention of such a thing is almost equivalent to threatening dissolution. But the Central Association knows no difference; they are all striving in their own way for a common object. Along with the missionary effort already mentioned, however, has been carried an endeavour to secure some uniformity of working. Early in the history of the Central Association, a committee framed a model set of rules, which embodied the experience of the Societies, saved new organisations from much trouble and inconvenience, and prevented their commencing operations on wrong financial principles. Several other committees have sat for the purpose of collecting information on subjects of interest, and enabling the Societies to benefit by mutual observation. Especially has this been the case with regard to the supervision of the important department of disablement. The Central Association has been the means of placing before parliamentary committees, the position of the movement, and of affording to foreign governments and organisations information as to its extent and progress. By a judicial interpretation of the law affecting friendly societies, miners' permanent societies were placed in the same category as organisations depending for their revenue upon collectors from door to door, and two Acts of Parliament have, by their united efforts, been obtained for the purpose of relieving them from any costly and cumbersome regulations in this respect.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

Special attention has also been given to colliery accident fund surpluses, with a view of their being applied to the purposes of the permanent societies; a scheme has been prepared by Mr. Francis G. P. Neison, F.I.A., on the instructions of the Central Association, for protecting by re-insurance the various district societies from the danger of being overwhelmed by great disasters; and successful efforts have been made to guide public sympathy on the occasion of its outbreak after great calamities in such a direction as to be helpful, and not hurtful, to the permanent organisations. It may be convenient to state here that the allowances to widows are, generally speaking, 5*s.* per week during widowhood; to children, from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* until 13 years of age; and to disabled members, from 6*s.* to 10*s.* per week. The contributions of the workmen vary from 2½*d.* to 4½*d.* per week; and while in all the districts efforts have been made to enlist the co-operation of colliery proprietors and royalty owners, the amount of success has been exceedingly varied.

8273. I do not know whether there is anything in this which you would feel satisfied to leave for members of the Commission to read, as distinguished from giving it all as verbal evidence?—The proof has been carefully prepared, and I would rather read it. Mr. Steele, in his evidence before the Commission on August 5th, referred to efforts that had been made to obtain the support of royalty owners. From the inception of permanent organisations for dealing with the distress caused by mining accidents, it appears to have been contemplated that the contributories to the funds should be threefold, viz., the lessor of the mine, the lessee, and the miner. The idea was recently embodied in a Bill before Parliament, and has several times been before the House of Commons. With regard to that measure it was proposed to make all the contributions compulsory, and perhaps this was largely due to the fact that in the nation, as a whole, voluntary arrangements had been a failure, so far as regards obtaining contributions from the royalty owners. Sir John Llewelyn, the President of the Monmouthshire and South Wales Society, read a paper on the subject at the annual conference of the Central Association in 1889, and he then expressed the opinion, founded on information given to him by the secretary of the Association, that the contributions of the mineral owners to the permanent societies throughout the kingdom did not exceed 1,500*l.* a year, a sum which, as he said, bore "a sadly inadequate proportion to the "203,056*l.* contributed by the colliery workers "and colliery owners." Up to this period the basis of lessors' contributions that had been proposed was a per-centage on the mineral royalties, and this was actually paid by several lessors. About this time, however, it was suggested that this method of ascertainment was objectionally inquisitorial, and a movement was commenced in North Wales with the object of fixing the rate of lessors' contributions on a proportion equal to half the amount subscribed

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

by the colliery proprietors. This plan has actually been adopted in North Wales, as the result of a meeting presided over by the Duke of Westminster, at which was passed the following resolution: "That this meeting of royalty "owners in North Wales is of opinion that the "proposal that they should contribute to the "Miners' Permanent Relief Society a sum equal "to one-half the amount now subscribed by the "lessees is deserving of cordial support, and "recommends to the royalty owners that they "should carry it into effect unanimously. A "considerable proportion of them—representing "one-third of the coalfields under operation—"having already promised to do so: and the "maintenance, in a sound financial position, of "the Society being of great importance, not "only to the mining population, but also to the "community at large." The meeting was only held in the Spring of this year, but I am in a position to state that the result, so far, has been exceedingly satisfactory; the last report to my hand stating that no lessor to whom application had been made had refused to subscribe on the terms laid down in the resolution. The founders of the movement in the north were mainly workmen. The employers, as a body, looked askance at it. There is in existence a letter, written by an authority on their side, proving to his satisfaction, at any rate, that a permanent fund could not prosper. Some of the coal-owners favoured it; but reference to the appended tables will show that in the home of its birth the movement has never been helped to the extent that might have been expected by the proprietor class. They have not been represented on its administration, and its working and development are practically wholly in the hands of the employed.

8274. By "in the north," do you mean Northumberland and Durham?—Yes. It is not so in other coalfields. In nearly every case the establishing of the Societies has been the result of combined action on the part of masters and men; and in the raising of funds, and in their management, capital and labour are both represented. On the question of truck the Societies have maintained united action. When the last measure on this question was before Parliament, it was pointed out that the bulk of the workmen's contributions to the Miners' Permanent Funds were made by deductions from their wages; and a resolution declaring that, while not wishing to express any opinion on truck generally, the conference of 1887 considered it "exceedingly undesirable that "any clause should be introduced into the "Bill interfering with the existing arrange-"ments of collecting the contributions of "members of Miners' Permanent Societies," was effectively brought before Parliament. I had hoped that the circumstances under which each Society was formed would have been testified to the Commission by the employers and employed of the districts to which they relate, and I am exceedingly sorry that some of them are represented neither by members of the Commission, nor witnesses who have hitherto been called before it. So far, I have submitted facts concerning which there is no difference of opinion amongst the Societies forming the Central Association by whose Council I am directed to give evidence. There remains to be considered a question on which great diversity of opinion and practice prevails amongst the Societies, and concerning which the Commission will be good enough to consider that while the facts may be as reliable as those I have hitherto set forth, the opinions are my own. Now, shall I go on with this proof as I have given it to you, or will you put questions to me?

8275. Is there some reason why you should not treat the remaining portion of this proof in the same manner as the earlier part?—Not the least. I beg to put in a table marked A, showing, from 1885, the number of members of Miners' Permanent Societies who have, and the number who have not, entered into arrangements with their employers in view of the Employers' Liability Act of 1880.

8276. I think we might read the last column?—In 1890 there were "under arrangement" 110,987.

8277. When you say "under arrangement," you mean under arrangement for contracting out of the Employers' Liability Act?—Yes. We object to the words "contracting out of the Act," but prefer the phrase "under arrangement in view of the Act."

8278. Does it mean that the 110,000 miners, the numbers appearing on this table in 1890, were members who had contracted out of the Employers' Liability Act as a condition of owners contributing to the fund?—Yes, except that we have always, at all the Commissions or Committees where I have had the honour of giving evidence, objected to the phrase "contracting out of the Act."

Mr. *Fowler.*

8279. You do not object to the thing; it is to the description of it?—(*No answer.*)

Mr. *Dale.*

8280. The table, of course, is clear enough, except for the expression "under arrangement." Of course, "under arrangement" without some explanation would not be intelligible. What I wanted to elicit from you was whether we were to understand the words "under arrangement" to mean that it represented the men who had agreed not to take advantage of the Act?—It would if you took the table only, but if you take the table with the report which I intended it to accompany, you will see that it meant that the people are "under arrangement in view of the Act." I did not invent the phrase.

Mr. *Fowler.*

8281. Tell us what the thing means?—Mr. Dodson said that colliery proprietors who entered into this arrangement did not, as was commonly said, contract out of the Act, but they entered into an "arrangement in view of the Act."

Mr. *Dale.*

8282. Does it mean that the numbers appearing under the head "under arrangement" represent men who in consideration of certain contributions by their employers to the permanent relief funds, agree not to take advantage of the Employers' Liability Act?—Certainly.

8283. It would appear that at the end of 1890, 110,987 men were within that category, and 157,998 were not within that category?—Yes, that is so.

8284. Of course both sections being members of permanent relief societies?—Yes.

8285. And then in 1885, 82,916 had entered into arrangement, and 126,390 had not?—Yes.

8286. Will you proceed, please?—The words "contracting out of the Act" I set aside as not fairly representing the arrangement into which colliery proprietors and their workmen have entered under the system now prevailing in some of the districts. For it is contended that the existing contracts are "in view of the Act" and are the result of the legislation it embodies, rather than an attempt to evade its provisions. The reason why Table A. commences at 1885 is that it was originally prepared for the purposes of the Select Committee of the House of Commons to whom in 1886 two amending Bills were referred, and who were instructed to inquire into the operation of the Act of 1880. I propose now to submit a summary of what has been done in some of the districts in which miners' permanent societies existed between the date of the passing of the Act and the appointment of the Select Committee. Commencing with the Northumberland and Durham district, it appears that the first action taken in view of the Act was in the form of a letter addressed to Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P., and the late Mr. William Crawford, M.P., by the coalowners, and signed by their secretary, the late Mr. Theo. Wood Bunning suggesting that the Permanent Relief Fund of the district should be made the basis of an arrangement between employers and employed, in view of the Act. The general committee of the Permanent Relief Fund passed a resolution expressing the opinion that the letter presented an excellent basis for mutual agreement whereby every reasonable advantage expected to result from the passing of the Act might be secured. In the county of Durham the men's association passed a resolution in favour of an assessment committee being formed to decide upon any cases that might come within the meaning of the Act and to award the amount of money to be paid; but this proposal was not accepted by the employers. In Northumberland the men appointed a deputation, who had a conference with the employers, and eventually the following questions were referred to a vote of the workmen in the district:—(1.) "Are you "in favour of allowing the Act to operate and "things to take their course?" (2.) "Are you "in favour of the present benefits being con-

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

"firmed by an arrangement with the coal "trade?" By a majority of 100 to 80 (*see* the report from the Select Committee, 1886, on the Employers' Liability Act, 1880, Amendment Bill, page 517) the votes were found to give an affirmative reply to the first question. No arrangement was therefore made under the Act, and in both counties the coalowners formed mutual protection associations for the purpose of insuring themselves against all pecuniary liabilities under the Act, and the costs and damages awarded in any cases tried are paid by the associations. In North Staffordshire there were many meetings both of employers and employed at the time of the passing of the Act, and eventually a scheme was adopted, making the North Staffordshire Permanent Relief Society available as a basis for contracts in view of the Act. A small proportion of the members of the Society are under an arrangement, in consideration of an increased contribution paid by the employers. In South Staffordshire an attempt was made to form a Permanent Relief Society after the passing of the Act, but it was not successful for two reasons: first, because the principal collieries in the district, those of Lord Dudley, had not joined in the movement, having a Miners' Relief Fund of their own; and, secondly, because of the activity of the insurance companies in the district, these companies carry out an extraordinary arrangement. They receive the contributions of the workmen, and pay some allowance in all cases of accident, and they agree also to insure the employers against liability, so that the men actually provide the fighting funds for their masters. In Lancashire and Cheshire, in the November following the passing of the Employers' Liability Act, 1880, at a meeting of coalowners it was suggested that a defence fund should be formed similar to those now existing in Northumberland and Durham, and it appeared to be contemplated that the voluntary subscriptions then paid to the Relief Society should be paid instead to the Masters' Relief Fund. Upon this being announced through the public press, the late Mr. William Pickard, the leading miners' agent in the county, publicly suggested that instead of this course being adopted, which would surely lead to much litigation and illwill, an attempt should be made to come to an arrangement in view of the Act on the basis of the Permanent Relief Society. Conferences were held upon the subject, and a committee was appointed consisting of Mr. Pickard, Mr. Maskell William Peace, law clerk to the Employers' Association, and myself. The then Solicitor-General, now Lord Herschell, and Mr. Horace Smith were consulted, and they advised that it was competent for the employers and employed to make such mutual arrangements between themselves for a valuable consideration to the employed, such as would enable payment in cases of all accidents to be made by the Miners' Pemanent Relief Society to persons injured and to their representatives in case of death, in lieu of the legal remedies provided by the Act in such limited cases as would fall under

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

arrangements in view of the Act; in 1889, of those who had not. Curiously, the cause was the same in both cases. In each instance a society had lost popularity by an endeavour to place its benefits in accord with its receipts. Before the Select Committee of 1886 I advocated that the Employers' Liability Act should be made permanent, and that contracts in view of the Act should be prohibited, which were based alone on consideration of employment. The contract should make provision for all accidents as sufficient as the Act contemplates in cases where the employer is liable. The proportion of the financial responsibility to be borne by the employer should be determined by competent authority. The suggestion that has been made before the Commission that some of the miners' permanent societies are under the control of the employers in point of management, will be contradicted by witnesses actually engaged in their administration. I have not found any difficulty in carrying out arrangements whereby employers should be represented on the administrative bodies, and at the same time the workmen remain a majority of the managers. I should like to be permitted to repeat that on all questions where the policy and practice of the miners' permanent societies which are connected with the Central Association are not identical, the opinions I have expressed are not to be accepted as those of the Central Association as a body.

Mr. *Fowler.*

8287. There are 110,000 who have contracted themselves out of the Act, and who have to rely in case of any accident upon the allowances of these permanent societies; there are 157,000 who have not contracted themselves out of the Act, and that number I see includes the whole of the miners in Northumberland and Durham. Now what is their position in case of an accident?—Would you put it, the position of their fund?

8288. No; what is their position? An accident happens. You have been giving us an argument to show how advantageous it is to the 110,000 to have contracted themselves out of the Act?—I surely have not, have I?

8289. Well, I so construed it?—No, I did not. I am not an advocate in this case.

8290. In your opinion, I want you to tell me what is the position of the 157,000 who have not contracted themselves out of the Act?—They have the opportunity of bringing an action against their employers. May I go further?

8291. Yes?—There have not been a dozen actions since the passing of the Act of 1881 in the two districts of Northumberland and Durham.

8292. They have been settled without action, but there have been accidents?—Yes.

8293. Compensation, then, has been paid without action, but the miners have received compensation?—No, it is not only not so, but it

Mr. *Fowler*—continued.

is the other way. For instance, in Northumberland—I speak in the presence of the greatest authority there is about Northumberland—there has been no action brought by the workmen against the masters which has not resulted in a verdict for the masters.

8294. I do not quite understand you If the accident occurs the master has two modes of dealing with it; he can either compensate voluntarily or he can stand the racket of an action. You see there have only been a certain number of actions. I want you to tell me how many accidents there have been for which compensation has been paid?—Under the Employers' Liability Act?

8295. Yes?—None.

8296. None whatever?—No. I hope I am not wrong about that, but you see you are tackling me about a district which does not come within my personal observation.

8297. I do not want to do so?—I say I believe there have been no accidents in Northumberland in which any compensation has been paid under the Employers' Liability Act.

8298. I do not want to put anything into your mouth that you do not wish to say, but am I to understand you to be of opinion that the 157,000 are better protected than the 110,000?—Oh, dear no! I say they are not.

8299. You say the 110,000 are better protected then?—Distinctly I do.

8300. And you think that the contribution of 25 per cent. which the masters pay in the one case is a larger contribution than they would have to pay if the Act was put in force, and they were rendered liable under that Act?—But that is not a question of opinion.

8301. Be good enough either to say yes or no to what I say to you?—I am not always able to say yes or no. On this occasion it is not a question of opinion, it is a question of absolute fact.

8302. I ask you, do you know the fact?—Yes.

8303. Then tell me what it is?—The fact is this, that in the case of Northumberland and Durham, we will say, which bears a fair proportion to the rest of the population in the kingdom, there have been three actions, and the whole of the actions have resulted in favour of the employers. In the case of the rest of the kingdom the workmen have received—I have put it in evidence—so many thousands of pounds.

8304. Putting those two together leads you to the conclusion that the masters make a larger contribution in the 25 per cent. than they would make if that fund was not in force?—Yes. May I carry that point one step further?

8305. Certainly, any explanation you like to make?—They make a very much larger contribution than they need make if they insured themselves against the liability imposed by the Act.

8306. Just about that question of insurance; do not the masters in Staffordshire pay so much per head to the insurance company for each

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

29–31. And there has been no alteration the Act came into operation?—No. May I ain a case, probably the best case I can ibly give you?

332. If you please?—Colonel Blundell's lieries notoriously are collieries at which con- cting out of the Act prevails; but at those lieries a man may elect whether he will be der an arrangement in view of the Act and ceive from his proprietor 25 per cent., or hether he will not be under an arrangement in iew of the Act, and receive from his proprietor 5 per cent.

8333–6. You stated also that there had been a steady decrease in the number of accidents in the localities referred to, where the men have entered into these arrangements with you?—Did I not localise the districts?

8337. I am referring to the bottom of page 10 of your proof?—I see; it is in North Wales.

8338. You mention a great number of districts, and you say they are all under contracts in view of the Act, "and a most remarkable thing is that "since the Act was passed, there has been a "steady decrease in the number of accidents, "suggesting that the contracts do not lead to "carelessness in working"?—The paragraph refers entirely, you will see, to North Wales; the figures are so.

8339. Is it not a fact that that decrease which we all rejoice to observe is universal; has there not been a general improvement in the mining districts for several years past?—The figures show that such has been the case.

8340. Now I should like to ask a question or two with regard to a point which you have not given evidence upon, but it is of very great importance, namely, how the contributions of the members are deducted in Lancashire and throughout the districts that your societies cover?—The returns that I have had made seem to show that in the Northumberland and Durham Society (I should like to be allowed to correct a 1*d.* or 2*d.* in the £ if I am wrong about it) there is a charge made of 7*d.* in the £ for the person who makes the deduction from the wages, and then there is a further 7*d.* in the £ charge made for the persons who locally administer the fund. These contributions look small as we are talking about them, but they are very large in the aggregate; they amount to many thousands of pounds. In the North Staffordshire Society the local secretary is paid 10 per cent. on the first 100*l.* received for entrance fees and contributions, and 5 per cent. for the remainder.

8341. You have given there what is paid to the local officials of the fund itself; would you state, if you are able, what allowance, if any, is made or what commission is paid to the colliery official who deducts the money?—It seems to me in that case according to the report I have received that there is no payment to the colliery owner or to his official for deducting the money. That is one of the societies concerning which I am a little vague, but according to the returns I have received there is no payment there deducted at all either for the colliery proprietor or for the official who collects the money.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

Mr. *Dale.*

8342. Of what district are you speaking in giving that information?—We have got to North Staffordshire. The payment in North Staffordshire is 10 per cent. on the first 100*l.*, this is a very curious arrangement it seems to me; and then 5 per cent. on the remainder. Then in Lancashire and Cheshire the payment is 5 per cent. on the original contribution of the society, which was 3*d.* a week. It is now 4½*d.* a week, so that practically it will be 3½ per cent. on the present contributions. In that case the proprietors and their officials receive nothing for the deductions. The deductions are generally made through the proprietors' books, and we are allowed to send our Friendly Society's auditor to check them. In the West Riding of Yorkshire the local agents are paid 2½ per cent. on all the moneys they receive, and they are allowed 2 per cent. if the contributions are not deducted at the colliery; which means, I suppose, that some officer at the colliery may be paid 2½ per cent. for collection of contributions so that 2½ per cent. is paid in any case. Then in North Wales the same principle obtains as that which I have stated with regard to Lancashire and Cheshire; there is 5 per cent. paid, and the collection of the money is through the colliery office and is free absolutely. In the Midland counties the local agents have 6*d.* in the £ for themselves, and 6*d.* in the £ is paid to the cashier where the contributions are stopped at the colliery office. It would seem that a payment of 2½ per cent. is made to the administrator of the agency, and 2½ per cent. to the colliery official. In South Wales the society's local officers receive 5 per cent. on the original contribution, which was 3*d.*, but which has since been increased. In the Midland district the only district I have now to put in, they are paid nothing, and the contributions are gratuitously collected by the colliery proprietors.

Mr. *Hewlett.*

8343–55. In page 11 of the statement where you have mentioned the setting on foot of the society in South Wales, were any special steps taken then to prevent any suggestion that compulsion was used, and, if so, what were they?—We were at that time in this position, that it was strongly alleged against us that compulsion was being used in Lancashire, and when the movement was started in South Wales, which was immediately after the time when the Act came into operation, notices were issued advising colliery owners of South Wales against doing anything which might be stretched into the appearance of compulsion.

8356. Issued by whom?—By the promoters of the society, and great care was taken that every colliery owner in South Wales should know that anything in the nature of compulsion would be a thing that would surely tell against them times to come.

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

8357. Going from that, in West Lancashire a great number of the collieries have made arrangements in view of the Act; on the other hand, you instanced one, namely, Colonel Blundell's, in which no such arrangement is made. Could you make any comparison between the benefits at the two sorts of collieries between those which have 15 per cent. not in view of the Act, and the others which have 25 per cent. in view of the Act. For instance, have there been many actions at Colonel Blundell's colliery?—I am not aware that there have been any.

Mr. *Hewlett*—continued.

8358. You come a great deal in contact with the working men in that part of Lancashire, would you be likely or not to have heard of such arrangements as were alluded to by Mr. Burt—no doubt there are some in many places—which have been made instead of an action being brought on; have you heard of any such?—No.

8359. Do you think you would have been likely to have heard of them if there had been many such or any such?—I think I should.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till to-morrow at half-past 11 o'clock.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

Commission Room, Westminster Hall, Friday, 11th December 1891.

PRESENT:

Mr. DAVID DALE (CHAIRMAN).

Mr. G. BALFOUR, M.P.
Mr. W. ABRAHAM, M.P.
Mr. T. BURT, M.P.
Mr. A. HEWLETT.
Mr. E. TROW.

Mr. HENRY TAIT (Group B.), the Right Hon. Sir A. J. MUNDELLA, M.P., the Right Hon. Sir JOHN GORST, Q.C., M.P., Mr. JAMES MAWDSLEY, Mr. GEORGE LIVESEY, and Mr. M. AUSTIN (Group C.) also attended.

Mr. JOHN BURNETT, Mr. GEOFFREY DRAGE, } Joint Secretaries.

Mr. EVAN OWEN called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

8360. You live at Cardiff, I believe, and are a member of the County Council of that borough?—Yes.

8361. Are you General Secretary of the Monmouthshire and South Wales Miners' Permanent Provident Society?—Yes.

8362. Were you appointed to that position in June 1881, six months after the society was formed?—I was.

8363. Were you previously employed by the workmen as check weigher, and for years prior to that did you work as a collier?—I did.

8364. Do you desire to give us some information in regard to the membership of that society?—Yes. The society in a numerical sense commenced in a very small way, but its growth compared with other societies of a similar character has been very rapid, and it now ranks second in the kingdom.

8365. In numbers and income?—In point of numbers. On the 30th September last it had enrolled 56,511 members.

8366. To what do you attribute its large membership?—The cause of this in my opinion is largely to be attributed to the fact that its chief administration has been in the hands of the working classes.

8367. By which you mean in the hands of the members themselves?—In the hands of the members themselves.

8368. Have you formed the majority of the local agencies now belonging to the society?—I have inaugurated and formed the majority of the local agencies now belonging to the society. I might be allowed to add that every agency has been formed by enrolling as many persons as would agree to join. The majority of agencies commenced operations with about a dozen members; others gradually joined until the majority of the workmen became identified with the society.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

8369. How is the business of each agency conducted?—The business of each agency is conducted in accordance with the rules of the society, and with a series of orders formulated by the board of management.

8370. By agency I understand you mean branch of your society?—Yes.

8371. Do you know of any agency where the workmen are compelled by the owners to join?—No, I am not aware of any agency where the workmen are compelled by the owners to join the society.

8372. Are there certain sick and accident funds belonging to the collieries?—There are. I find there are 46 sick and accidental funds belonging to the collieries where our society is in existence. In 26 of these the workmen compel all persons under 50 years of age to join the sick funds.

8373. In what manner do they so compel them?—I use the word "compel" in this sense, that it is a sort of understanding that the best thing to do for everybody concerned is to join the sick funds.

8374. Should not that word be qualified somewhat, then?—Well, it should; it should be modified to this extent, that it is a sort of mutual understanding between the men themselves that an arrangement of this kind is to the benefit of everybody concerned.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

hood, and 2*s.* 6*d.* per week to each child under 13 years of age. On the death of an unmarried member a funeral allowance of 20*l.* is paid. In the case of disablement 6*s.* per week is paid during the first six weeks of disablement, and 8*s.* per week during the remainder of the period of disablement.

Sir *John Gorst.*

8405. I should like to know whether these payments refer to cases of accident or whether cases of ordinary sickness and ordinary misfortune were included ?—Accident alone.

Mr. *Dale.*

8406. You say that the contributions of the workmen have, reached 229,260*l.*; now a fourth of that, that is to say, 25 per cent., would be 57,315*l.* ?—Yes.

8407. And the employers have subscribed 56,163*l.*, or almost the fourth ?—Yes.

8408. You rather led the Committee, I think, to understand that there was something like a general abstention from contribution on the part of the owners, that, I will not say not many but, —not all owners at any rate did contribute ?—All owners where the workmen have formed a society do contribute to the funds.

8409. That is very important; they could not contribute if the workmen had not formed the society ?—No.

8410. Therefore, as a matter of fact, the owners do contribute 25 per cent. wherever they have the opportunity ?—Yes, that is so.

8411. And in fact the contributions of the owners and the honorary members together considerably exceed 25 per cent. ?—Yes, that is so.

8412. You say that a large margin of the mining population of the district is not connected with it ?—Yes; there has been, ever since the formation of the society, a large margin of the mining population of the district not connected with the society.

8413. Therefore, where in an earlier part of your evidence you stated that there are 69,645 persons employed at the collieries where your society is in operation, and that of those 56,511 are members, the large margin to which you have just referred does not apply to the difference between those two figures ?—No.

8414. Would it apply to those localities where you have not established any branch ?—That is so.

8415. Have you failed to establish a branch because you did not meet with encouragement to do so ?—Yes.

8416. Or because you have not attempted to do so ?—In some cases we have failed to establish a branch simply because we have had no encouragement, and at other places we have not made an attempt; we have not been able to cover the ground.

8417. Is there any other point on which you desire to offer evidence in chief ?—No; I think that covers the ground.

Mr. *Burt.*

8418. I think you somewhat qualified your statement with regard to the workmen being compelled or compelling each other to join the sick funds ?—Yes; I modify my statement in this way: that I think I would not give the word its strict legal sense. The workmen are compelled to an extent, but it is a sort of mutual compulsion, if you will allow the term, where the men agree that it is the best thing to do.

8419. In what way can they bring pressure to bear otherwise than by persuading ?—They can bring pressure to bear by getting the assistance of the management. They approach the management and ask the management to help them to get the people into their sick funds, and the management act accordingly.

8420. Then in that case do the officials of the colliery make it a condition of employment that the men shall be members of the fund ?—In some cases I think they do.

8421. Are there many cases of that kind ?—I think not—not many.

8422. Out of the 26 that you specified how many do you think there would be of that kind ?—I have no reliable statistics to help me in this respect, but I should think I might put it at a dozen or so.

8423. I think you said, in answer to the Chairman, that you have not any cases of employers paying 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. quite irrespective of whether the Employers' Liability Act is allowed to operate or not ?—No; we have no employer who contributes less than 25 per cent. They contribute 25 per cent. or none at all.

8424. And all those who contribute 25 per cent. do so on condition that the Employers' Liability Act shall not be put in operation by their workmen ?—That is so.

8425. How is that made effective ? How is that carried out ? Are the workmen called upon to sign some agreement to that effect ?—Yes; we have an agreement to that effect, and the workmen and the owners sign it.

8426. Of course that is the condition of employment, otherwise a man refusing to do that will not be employed ?—No, not exactly the condition of employment, but it is the condition of their becoming members of the society —not necessarily a condition of employment, because I have shown in my evidence in chief that at the agencies where the society is now in existence we have 13,374 persons who are not members who have not signed this agreement although the society is in operation there.

8427. Does it operate in this way, that a man seeking employment where a branch of the society is formed and is in full operation is asked if he will become a member of the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund ?—Yes; in numerous cases a man is asked if he will become a member.

8428. And then if he refuses to become a member is he refused employment ?—No.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

is contributed with that understanding ?—Well, they can be used for that purpose in accordance with the terms of the rules.

8450. And are contributed with that understanding ?—No, I do not think they are contributed with that understanding, but they are contributed to help the contributions of the ordinary members.

8451. The contribution of the employers is available for the management whatever becomes of the benefit to the workmen ?—I am adhering to the rule strictly. The rule gives power to the board of management to expend the 25 per cent. contributed by the owners for management expenses. The experience of the society shows that 25 per cent. is not required for management expenses, and that the overplus, the surplus over and above what is actually required for the actual expense of management, is handed over to the benefit fund to meet the relief.

8452. So that the fact is, whatever the amount of the overplus beyond the expenses goes to the general purposes ?—Yes.

8453. If there is none there is none to go ?—There is none to go.

8454. Do you find that the royalty owners of the district contribute towards this fund ?—They do to an extent, but not to a very large extent. We have a few royalty owners who contribute very handsomely, but the majority of the mineral owners do not contribute at all.

8455. If it is advisable to have any compulsion at all with respect to the matter, do you not think it is quite as necessary to compel royalty owners to contribute their fair share to this fund as either compelling the employers or the workmen to do so ?—I could not express an opinion as to whether it would be advisable to compel them ; but if colliery proprietors are asked to contribute to those funds which are for the benefit of their workmen, in my opinion the mineral lessors should also be called upon to contribute their quota in order to assist the workmen.

Mr. *Dale.*

8456. Mr. Thomas Richards, who gave evidence before this Commission on the 18th November, stated that the owners "contribute "25 per cent." (speaking of your fund) "on what "the men contribute, and for that 25 per cent. "they retain the whole management of the "business in their own hands. That is what "we complain of chiefly." Does your experience bear out that statement that the owners retain the whole management of the business in their own hands ?—No. I have just shown that the system prevailing as to the management of local agencies is entirely in the hands of the workmen, that is to say, the workmen are permitted to appoint their own committee, which is largely composed of working men. I have shown that at our local agencies there are 115 officials and 577 workmen, so that the management of the local agencies is entirely—well, I might say almost entirely in the hands of the men themselves. Then with regard to the general management, I have given it in my evidence in chief that the administration is in the hands of a joint committee, composed of 10 owners and 13 workmen. So that in regard to the general management of the society there is as a preponderance of workmen over masters.

8457. Have you anything to add ?—No.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. Henry Thomas called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

8458. Where do you live ?—At Eirw Road, Havod, near Pontypridd.

8459. Are you a collier ?—Yes.

8460. Still ?—Yes.

8461. You are 57 years of age, I believe ?—Yes.

8462. For how long have you worked underground ?—I have worked 45 years.

8463. Did you for some years act as the agent for the miners of the Aberdare district ?—I did.

8464. Do you mean as secretary of a miners' lodge ?—No, as miners' agent.

Mr. *Abraham.*

8465. For the Miners' Union ?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale.*

8466. Were you one of the original members of the Miners' Permanent Provident Society ?—I was.

8467. And from its formation have you, after several elections by ballot, been one of its vice-presidents ?—Yes.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

8468. Are you so still ?—Still.

8469. Have you regularly attended the meetings of the board of management ?—I have.

8470. That means the central board of management, does it not ?—Yes.

8471. Has there at any such meetings been a majority of owners ?—Not to my knowledge at all. We have generally made complaints ourselves as workmen that they do not attend often enough.

8472. That the employers do not attend often enough ?—Yes.

8473. Have you taken an active part in the formation of several local agencies ?—I have.

8474. And what information have you afforded to the workmen on such occasions ?—Well, I have always informed those that it was optional on their part whether they joined the society or not.

8475. Has any complaint been made to you by anyone that the owners obliged their employees to join the fund ?—I have had no complaints whatever in any case.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

8476. Apart from complaints, is it within your knowledge that at any of the collieries within your district owners made membership of this fund a condition of employment?—Not at all in any place.

8477. Not within your knowledge?—No.

8478. At the colliery where you are now working, how many men are employed?—There are employed in that colliery 1,860.

8479. How many of those are members of the benefit society, and how many are not?—There are 1,842 members, and there are at present 18 non-members.

8480. Have any workmen who have left your colliery, being then members of the society, continued their membership?—Yes. There have been more, but at present there are only 15 paying their contributions to the agency, and yet working in other collieries. Of course, I can tell you where the collieries are.

8481. In regard to those members, is there any owners' contribution paid?—No.

8482. Is it within your personal knowledge that where the contributions of persons who have not agreed to become members are deducted, such contributions were, on application to that effect being made, immediately refunded to the applicant?—Yes, always the case so far as I know.

8483. You have mentioned certain collieries and a number of persons employed there who are not members?—Yes, at Tylor's colliery up in the Ferndale valley, where I worked previously to coming to work where I am at present. I helped to form the society in that place. There are 92 persons in that colliery who are not members at present. At the Standard colliery there are 173 who have not been enrolled as members, and at the National colliery there are 31, and at the Ferndale collieries there are 169 workmen outside of the society.

8484. Do you mention these facts with a view to making it apparent that the workmen are free either to be members or to be non-members?—Yes, that is so.

8485. You have heard the evidence given by Mr. Evan Owen in regard to the manner in which the local business of the fund is administered: do you confirm that?—Yes, as near as ever I can. At each of the agencies I have mentioned the business of the agency is conducted by a committee composed almost entirely of workmen. I have had a chance of visiting several agencies, and I do not think there is one agency that I know of but what I have visited myself in going around in our investigation—we go annually—and I have not had any complaints made to me whatsoever of any compulsion at all made upon any person.

Mr. *Abraham.*

8486. You stated that you took an active part in the formation of several local agencies?—Yes.

8487. And have at all times informed the workmen that membership in the society was absolutely optional on their part?—Yes.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

8488. You have never received any complaint from workmen to the effect that the employers in some places compelled them to join?—I have in this way: our people speaking against the fund in the colliery even where I am working at present. I have always told them that they are very foolish to pay any society of this description without they choose to do so themselves, and it is only for them to go to the office and ask for their contribution, and it is always given to them.

8489. So, as a matter of fact, then, it is within your own knowledge that you have a number of unwilling members; is it the fact?—Yes, but every unwilling member, as I said, has his contributions refunded.

8490. If he goes for them?—If he goes for them, yes.

8491. But, would he not be open to place himself under the displeasure of the management if he did ask for that to be refunded?—No, not at all, because there are men working now in collieries that I have named: they are old workmen, and they choose to be out of the society, and I am certain that there is no displeasure at all in any sort of way.

8492. As far as you are aware?—Yes, as far as I am aware I have never had any complaints of that at all.

8493. What is the usual form of enrolling members in this fund; what is the mode used to do it?—I do not think that it is the same all through. There are several collieries that I am aware of where the money is stopped without signing their names before going down the pit. It was complained of years ago that it would be a condition of employment if the person was to sign his name before going down the colliery, so that now in some agencies the money is stopped the first time—that is, without asking the man. We have had cases with us where persons have been killed within the fortnight, and their widows are on the funds now. They never gave their names at all, but the money was kept back on the first pay.

8494. We are not just now considering the advisability and the necessity of joining a fund, but simply the mode of enrolling members; that is what we want to know?—That is the mode with us.

8495. Now, within your knowledge, is it not the rule to enrol the men as members in this society in your district without asking whether they are willing or not, but keeping their money with the option if they do not like it to go and ask for it back?—No, it is not the rule.

8496. Give me a case where it is not?—There is Tylor's colliery.

8497. You are certain?—I am certain. I do not know what it is at present, but at the commencement I am certain of it, because I myself put my name in, and there it is in the book now.

8498. Give me another case; of course at the commencement it was necessary for each man to write his name or to put his mark?—Yes, that was the course.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

8499. How long did that continue?—It continued for a few years during the time I was there working—it may be about two years.

8500. Can you give me another case where the state of things that I have described is not the rule?—No, I could not give you strictly saying that it is carried out in those places at present, but at the commencement of them of course they were. I do not know whether they are at present. I would not like to say so.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

8501. Then this is a potent fact that the thousands of men who belong to the society in South Wales have their names enrolled on its books without their consent being given or asked, but with the option of going to ask for the money back if they are not satisfied?—I should not like to say that they are enrolled all in that way; there are only some cases.

8502. There are some cases?—I do not know how many.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. JOHN LEWIS called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

8503. You reside at Ebbw Vale?—Yes.

8504. And are secretary to the No. 8 local agency of the Monmouthshire and South Wales Miners' Permanent Provident Society?—Yes.

8505. Until six years ago were you a collier in the employment of the Ebbw Vale Company, and have you been so employed during your lifetime?—Yes.

8506. When was the local agency formed?—Ten years ago.

8507. What was its progress at first?—During 1881 we enrolled 577 members, in 1882 they grew to 1,000, in 1883 we were 1,203 members, in 1884 we were 1,959, in 1885 we were 2,251, in 1886 we were 2,266, in 1887 we were 2,281, in 1888 we were 1,935, in 1889 we were 2,153, and in 1890 we were 2,386. We were last September—that is, 1891—2,793.

8508. All those figures refer to the membership of the No. 8 local agency?—Yes.

8509. In fact, are nearly the whole of the workmen employed by the Ebbw Vale Company in membership?—There are 318 who are not.

8510. I understand you to be speaking more especially with reference to the No. 8 local agency?—Yes.

8511. Does that include all the collieries of the Ebbw Vale Company?—The whole of the collieries in Ebbw Vale.

8512. Some of them, not all of them, belonging to the Ebbw Vale Company?—All of them belonging to the Ebbw Vale Company.

8513. Now what is the mode of procedure, when a man is set to work there now, to induce him to become a member; in fact, to be short, is he treated as a member until he intimates that he does not wish to be one, or is he not treated as a member until he has intimated that he does wish to be one?—The same system prevails at the Ebbw Vale collieries now that did at the commencement of the society. There are books kept there, and each person signs his name in those books to become a member of the society, and in some cases, where members have joined and wished afterwards to discontinue payment, they have been allowed to do so by giving the prescribed four weeks' notice, according to the rules of the society.

8514. I understand you to say that a workman employed in the Ebbw Vale would not be treated as a member of the fund or society till

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

he had signified his acquiescence by signing?—Or intimating to me as their secretary that he wished to do so. In very many cases the workmen, before they become members, will call on me and tell me that they wish to have their names entered in the fund, and very often, when some of the workmen have boys going to work with them, they will come in the same manner and tell me to enter such a boy's name and charge his contributions to them.

8515. You have heard the evidence given by the two previous witnesses, Mr. Henry Thomas and Mr. Evan Owen, in regard to local management; do you confirm that evidence?—Yes. We have a local committee at our agency, and being a large agency we have a large committee. The committee is composed of 20 members, 18 of whom are workmen and two are officials. The officials are these: one is an overman, or underviewer, and the other a fireman. Those are the only two officials we have on our committee.

8516. Does the society exist also at Tredegar?—No.

8517. Why?—Partially because at the commencement of the establishment of those societies the workmen there objected to joining. Afterwards when some few years had sped a large section of the workmen applied to get a branch established, and it appears that the owners refused to contribute.

8518. I suppose you would not receive into membership a lodge, or whatever you call it, a local agency unless the owners were going to contribute?—Yes, we would; but the rules specify that in all such cases the members would receive 25 per cent. less benefits than those where the owners contribute. We have at present a few that are paying to our agency who are working in collieries where the fund is not in operation, and when any accident befalls them they receive this 25 per cent. less. We have at present once case where a man left our colliery and went to Tredegar, where he met with an accident which resulted in death, and at present his orphan child is upon our funds, of course receiving this 25 per cent. less. He thoroughly understood that, but he wished to continue his membership.

8519. Are you also the district secretary of the Ebbw Vale district of the Ashton Unity of Shepherds?—I am.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

8520. Secretary of one of their lodges?—Yes.

8521. Does it therefore come within your knowledge that the establishment of the Miners' Permanent Society has acted prejudicially upon those other bodies?—I am not aware that it has; it may probably appear so at first sight, because for some years a great portion of the friendly societies that are held in South Wales have been shown by actuarial statistics to be not in a very flourishing condition. Very often I find the custom is this, that when a lodge has become 15 or 20 years of age there are greater benefits offered by some new society starting than are to be got from this one which has been in existence for some time, and therefore it very often tends to draw the young members away from their present lodge and to join others. For instance, the Hearts of Oak Society some time ago opened their ranks to receive colliers. During the last four years, I suppose, we have had enrolled in that society in Ebbw Vale 300 members. We have also had several other lodges in connexion with friendly societies opened there which have a large membership as well.

8522. Therefore, it is not within your experience that the establishment and enrolment of members in the Miners' Permanent Society has discouraged men from becoming members of other friendly societies who offered some collateral or additional advantages?—Not that I am aware of; it has not come within my knowledge.

8523. Is there any other point you wish to state?—No, nothing occurs to me.

Mr. *Burt.*

8524. In the case you mentioned at Ebbw Vale, where there are 20 members of the committee, two of whom are officials and 18 workmen; are the two officials elected in the same way as the workmen?—Yes, elected at an annual meeting called for the purpose of electing officials and committeemen for each year in succession.

8525. They therefore occupy exactly the same position as the other members of the committee?—Exactly.

8526. The society does not pay sick allowance?—No.

8527. It just deals with accidents fatal and non-fatal?—Yes.

8528. Therefore, it makes other provision than the sick benefit societies, and does not come into competition with the sick benefit societies?—Not for sickness.

8529. I understand from you that there has not been any general decrease in the number of members of the society of which you are one of the officials—that is, the Ashton Unity of Shepherds?—There has been in the manner that I showed, several would leave having greater advantages offered by some new society.

8530. They would go into other societies, but there has not been a decrease in the aggregate number of the members of the sick societies?—Of friendly societies in general I think not, not in our neighbourhood.

8531. Would it not be a fact, has it not come under your observation, that as a rule the active members of the sick benefit societies are also the men who would advocate and promote the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund?—A great number would.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

Mr. *Abraham.*

8532. You were for some time, some years ago a collier working in the Ebbw Vale collieries?—Up to within the last six years.

8533. What position do you hold at present?—I am acting at present as secretary to the Permanent Relief Fund and secretary to this Friendly Society.

8534. You are not working at present?—No; that is, not underground.

8535. Where is your office?—The house where I live.

8536. You say that at present a man if he wishes to join this society has to come to your house and tell you so, and have his name put down?—He is not obliged to come to the house.

8537. If he wishes to join what does he do?—There are books kept at the collieries and he puts his name there, or he comes to the house, or he meets me when I am out perhaps about the collieries. I make it a point to go every week to the collieries to see what new members have joined, that is the way I collect the names. Being well known to nearly all the colliers there, having lived there my lifetime, of course they all know me, and when they meet me anywhere they tell me.

8538. When this society was first formed in Monmouthshire and South Wales, is it not a fact that the working men of Ebbw Vale were strongly averse to joining the fund?—A great number of them.

8539. The great majority of them?—Yes. That accounts for our number being only 577 in the first year.

8540. What was the mode used then to enrol these men as members in the society?—I do not know of any more than that they would be asked to join; possibly an overman may counsel them or the men may counsel each other.

8541. By whom were they asked?—Perhaps an overman may ask them or a foreman.

8542. Or a fireman?—Yes.

8543. Was it not customary for the fireman to take his book round to each man while he was in his working face?—Not that I am aware of; it was not done with me.

8544. Was it not done largely in Ebbw Vale? Not that I am aware of.

8545. Then where would the overman and the fireman come in contact with this man whom it was necessary to ask to become a member of the society?—He may see him in his working face or he may see him as he came up the pit. In several instances a workman would ask me—my fellow workmen would—"Where are the books that we are to sign to "join the fund?" "In the office." "Well, "who is there to take my name?" "No one; "there is no need of anyone, only get someone "to witness it; if you wish to join I will go "with you and witness it." I have done that in several instances—well, in dozens of cases.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

8546. Is the Commission to understand then, that as the men of Ebbw Vale join the union each man has to write his name, or put his mark to his name, on some special book for that purpose?—Yes, without they are cases where, as I have just said, they may meet me and tell me to put their names down and charge them, not to put their names on those books, but charge them in the offices with their contribution.

8547. Give you a consent to take their names to the office?—Really ask me to do it.

8548. They did not go to write their names themselves?—In those instances they did not.

8549. They were not led to understand either directly or indirectly that their joining this fund would be the condition of continuing in the employment of that company?—Not as far as my knowledge goes.

8550. You are aware that the statement has been made here that at one time the condition of employment in all the Ebbw Vale collieries was that a man should join this fund?—Not that I am aware of.

8551. Are you able to say that it was not so?—Well, I would not have sufficient information to say yea or nay to it.

Sir *John Gorst.*

8552. Most of your people belong to sick societies as well as to the Accident Society, do they not?—There is a large number does.

8553. Have you any idea what proportion?—No, I should not like to say what proportion, because there are so many societies that I know but very little about.

8554. I was going to ask you what are the societies which they join?—One society that is largely joined, that I made mention of, is called the Hearts of Oak; it has its chief office here in London. There is another society there that is called the Rational Friendly Society. There is a large number there. Then we have what is called the Ancient Order of Shepherds; they have about five lodges there. There is the Oddfellows' Society, which has, I should say, seven or eight lodges, perhaps, in the neighbourhood. Then there would be the Foresters with a large number of lodges, and there would be a society called the Ivorites; they are strong in that locality. I do not know that I could mention any other society, not by name; there are several of what we would term the old benefit societies. There are several of those, but how many I could not tell.

8555. Now do the societies which the men join make provision for old age as well as for sickness?—The only provision that I am aware of is a permanent sick pay at a low rate.

8556. In old age?—Yes.

8557. Is that provision made by means of friendly societies in your neighbourhood, or only by exceptional ones?—By most of them; I think I could say by all.

8558. By all?—With the exception of those that have their offices here—that is, the Hearts of Oak—I could not speak as to those.

Sir *John Gorst*—continued.

8559. Then what becomes generally of a miner when he gets too old to work?—Really I could scarcely say. There are several miners that I know of who are aged, possibly they may be in two societies, and what we would term the pension pay—that is—when it had come to the lowest scale—would generally be half-a-crown per week, that is to say, from each society, so that if a man had two he would have 5*s.*

8560. Do you know any aged miners who have to apply to the parish for relief?—Yes.

8561. Is that the common end of a miner? Unless he has been provident in his more youthful days.

8562. Have you any idea what proportion of the old people have to go upon the parish?—Unless they have sons and daughters who will see to them, I should say there would be three fourths.

8563. Who go on to the parish?—Yes, unless they have sons or daughters who would see to them.

8564. Do the people support their parents; I mean are they kind to their parents, and do they support them generally; if an old man has got sons working and doing well, do they generally support their parents?—A large number do, and I should think he would be a very unprincipled son that would not endeavour to do so too.

8565. In connexion with any of the mines are there any superannuation funds?—Not that I am aware of.

8566. Not in any mine?—Not in our locality.

8567. I mean in your South Wales locality?—Not that I am aware of.

Mr. *Burt.*

8568. Have you a superannuation fund or department in connexion with your Miners' Permanent Relief Fund, as in the North of England?—No; with the Permanent Relief Fund the amount of relief is 8*s.* per week however long a man may live.

8569. That is in case he happened to have an accident only?—Yes.

8570. But there is no superannuation?—No.

8571. Not an allowance simply for old age?—No.

Mr. *Austin.*

8572. When members join the society, are they made aware that they are contracting out of the Employers' Liability Act?—I believe they all know that.

8573. Are they made aware of it in joining it?—Yes, as far as they have asked me any questions.

8574. They must ask the question though before it is made known to them?—I do not know that any person has ever asked the question, neither can I tell whether it is always explained to them. I am not in a position to do that, but in each case where a person applies

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

an hour, and in that case there would be an hour's less winding coal. The loss of this output would certainly mean a reduction in proportion to everyone that works under my contract.

8599. You have formed a certain opinion which you desire to state here as to the extent to which the men in your district are in favour of a legal eight hours' day. Will you proceed to state it?—I believe the genuine feeling amongst the men is that they are not in favour of an eight hours' day.

8600. Is there a miners' union in your district?—Yes.

8601. What is the name of that union?—I am not a member of that association, therefore I do not really wish to give any evidence as regards the union. I am not in any way connected with it—I cannot do it.

8602. It exists; there is a union?—Certainly.

8603. Has it come within your knowledge that that union has made any declarations upon the subject of a legislative eight hours' day?—I believe they have taken some ballot on the question, but I do not believe the ballot is carried on in a very straightforward manner. The stallman in his stall may probably have six or eight men working under him, and of course they take the same course that he suggests to them as a rule; I find that.

8604. Has it come to your knowledge what the result of those ballots has been?—I really cannot tell.

8605. Have you any other evidence that you desire to offer before members of the Commission ask you questions?—I shall be very pleased to answer any questions that may arise regarding my occupation. As regards the stall work I do not feel prepared to give any evidence on that; but anything on the main road work amongst the boys I am prepared to give. I do not see that I can give any further evidence.

8606. Have you had any strike at your colliery lately?—We have had a strike, but it is 16 years since last August.

8607. Since then you have had no strike?—We have gone on very comfortably with the owners since then.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

8608. How are you yourself paid; on what principle?—I am paid by the ton.

8609. So much for every ton that you bring to the bottom of the pit?—On to the pit bank; I have to deliver it to the surface.

8610. On what principle do you settle the wages of the boys?—According to the ages and according to the class of work they are prepared to do. Sometimes a boy when he comes into the pit at 14 years of age is perhaps a bigger boy and more able to do a certain class of work than a boy who has been in six months. You set him at one thing, and if you find that he fails at this thing and it is too much for him, you have to shift him to another. You pay him according to what he can do.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

8611. Is it left entirely to yourself to decide what wages the boys are to receive?—Yes.

8612. Can you give us approximately the amount of wages earned by the boys?—From about 14 years of age there would be about 1*s.* 3*d.* per day paid; if they succeed pretty well up to 15 or 16 they may rise about a penny every three months, and when they get up to 16 or so some of them will earn 2*s.* 9*d.* or 3*s.* a day.

8613. And you adjust the wages in such a way that there will be a fair remuneration left to yourself?—That is it.

8614. You have given evidence as to the effect of an Eight Hours' Act upon the position of the boys, and you say first it will reduce their wages?—That is my opinion.

8615. I presume it would reduce your own earnings also?—Yes, also.

8615*a*. Correspondingly?—Yes.

8616. And you also think that if the effect of an Eight Hours' Act was to deprive the boys of half an hour for snap that would be prejudicial to their health?—I am quite convinced of it.

8617. And to their work?—They could not work without the snap.

8618. At present they have snap at half past 11?—That is it, till 12.

8619. And therefore they have to go from a quarter past 6 to half past 11 without any recognised hour for taking food?—That is it.

8620. Could not that system be with advantage changed so as to give them a quarter of an hour for breakfast, and a quarter of an hour for dinner?—The system was adopted, and it seemed to work all right for the majority of the contractors, and the boys have really not been considered in that way.

8621. Do you yourself think it would be a better arrangement to have a recognised time for breakfast?—I do.

8622. And would a quarter of an hour in each case be sufficient?—Yes, I should think that would answer the purpose.

8623. You have told the Commission that you think the men's real feeling is not in favour of an Eight Hours' Act?—I do think so.

8624. Could you give us your reasons for that opinion; have you any definite fact, I mean, to point to in support of it?—I go by what I hear amongst the men. I have no certain facts, not belonging to the union in any shape or form.

8625. You merely record the impression produced upon you by conversations which you have had with the men?—Just so.

8626. You also spoke about the method in which the ballots are conducted. You say you are not a member of the union?—No, I am not.

8627. Therefore you would not have any special knowledge, derived from your own experience, as to the way in which ballots are conducted?—No, I have nothing to do with the ballots at all.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

8628. Do you think that if an eight hours' day was introduced in your district it would lead to an attempt on the part of the owners to establish a double shift?—The double shift system has never been introduced into our district, as far as I know, in any shape or form whatever; it is a fallacy altogether.

8629. You do not think it is adapted to your district at all?—I do not.

8630. Supposing the output were reduced, as you believe would be the case, in what way do you think that the coal owners could make up for that diminution?—For the loss of the hours?

8631. Yes?—I cannot see that it can be made up.

8632. Could the collieries work additional time on Saturday?—That in my opinion the boys, and especially the young men who have got up to 18 years of age, would strongly resist. In our district, at our colliery, the firm that I am employed under, we work so that every day provides for itself. We start on Monday morning, and the Monday stands for itself. On the Saturday we give over at half past 10, that means four hours' winding.

8633. And you think that any attempt to make Saturday a whole day would not be popular?—I do not think we could get the boys to work, nor the young men; the rage for football and cricket and other sports and pastimes around the country is so great that they would want either to leave in time to go somewhere else or not to come if they could not leave. I do not think there is one in a hundred in our district who would really hesitate a moment in saying that he would not work on the Saturday the full day. As I understand, if we have the eight hours we shall be obliged to work the full day on the Saturday the same as on any other day.

8634. Have you heard any complaints either from the boys themselves, or from their parents, of nine hours a day from bank to bank being too long for them?—I have not.

8635. And, so far as your experience goes, you think that the boys are very healthy?—As a rule they are very healthy.

Mr. *Burt.*

8636. It is in Derbyshire, is it not, that you are working?—Yes.

8637. You have said that you are not a member of the union, and I do not want to ask you any questions on that point that you do not care to answer, but, as a matter of fact, there is a strong union in Derbyshire, is there not?—Yes, I believe there is.

8638. Is Mr. Haslam one of the agents?—He is the miners' agent, I believe—the head miners' agent.

8639. And is Mr. Harvey another?—Yes, he is under him.

8640. With regard to the boys, I think you say that they vary from about 14 to 18 years of age, and then they often begin to get coal, or to go to other employment as a rule, after they are 18 years of age?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

8641. Do they begin at 14 or earlier?—Under the law we can take them at 13, providing they have passed the fourth standard.

8642. And do many of them begin at 13?—Our manager is very strong on that point, and as a rule they very seldom come in unless it is a big boy, or something of that sort, before 14 years of age. You may take it as a standpoint from 14 to 21. If I retain him after that he takes a sort of corporal's place, and looks after the others the same as myself. I take one district, and then if he comes to get too big for a boy, or that sort of thing, I put him on to look over a certain amount of boys employed in another district.

8643. What do the boys at 14 usually do?—I can start them at coupling on about the pit bottom mouth, running the waggons about, and coupling ready for the gangers to take away. Then the gangers as a rule take these waggons away from these boys who have coupled them on the pit bottom.

8644. Are the boys sometimes engaged at driving horses?—Chiefly.

8645. Chiefly that?—Yes.

8646. And they would do that kind of work till about what age?—You can put one on if he improved himself all right at ganging, from 14 till he was about 15 or 15½ or so, just as he gets on, and then you could put him to something else, where the ponies cannot get, or where the place is level: you could put him to what we call a waggoning stint.

8647. You know what we in the north call putters, don't you?—I have no knowledge of the north at all.

8648. It is those that go into the face to get the coal out, to bring it out. It is generally done by ponies; have you anything of that kind in Derbyshire?—No, as a rule we fetch them all from the face.

8649. The same youth who brings the coal from the face takes it on to the shaft, is that so?—No; there may be three or four different lengths, and the boy from the face would, what we call, gang it down to the turn-out or siding, whichever you may term it, and then the other boy conveys it forward to another point, and so it is conveyed along the workings until it gets to the pit bottom. At our place we have an incline 500 yards down to the pit bottom, and the ponies deliver them at the bottom of the incline, and set them there for the man to fetch them out.

8650. Now at the snap time of which you spoke, from 11.30 to 12, is the work stopped altogether during that half hour?—Yes, from half past 11.

8651. There is no winding of coal?—No.

8652. And everybody then stops and gets his bait or meal?—Yes, that is so.

8653. And it is your impression that in case an Eight Hours' Act was passed from bank to bank the snap time would be abolished?—I believe so.

8654. But that is not advocated by those who are in favour of the eight hours, I presume?—

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

I am given to understand that there is no snap under the eight hours. It is eight hours from bank to bank and no standing while the pit is open.

8655. You are aware, are you not, that this snap time is not provided by Act of Parliament; it is simply a local arrangement, it is not part of the Act, so that an Act of Parliament would not interfere with that; it is a local arrangement; are you not aware of that?—I understand that from bank to bank means going down, and that there is no standing in the winding during that time; there cannot be if it is law for a man to come out when it is bank to bank, and it does not matter what is amiss he must come out as I understand.

8656. That is your understanding of the system of bank to bank, that it means abolishing or putting an end to the snap time?—Yes.

8657. You said that the men of Derbyshire are not favourable, in your opinion, to the eight hours; are you aware that at conferences the delegates from Derbyshire have always, at least for some years past, advocated it?—I am aware of it.

8658. Are you aware that Mr. Haslam and Mr. Harvey have strongly urged the adoption of the eight hours?—I believe they are going in for the eight hours.

8659. Do you think that they do not, in that respect, represent the opinion of the majority of the men?—I do.

8660. And you base that opinion of yours, as I understood from an answer you have just given, on the fact that you have not heard many of the men themselves declare in favour of it, and that you have heard many declare against it; is that so?—That is it; I believe the defect is done in the ballot. I am not prepared to say in which way, but I believe that is the secret of it.

8661. Have they had to your knowledge a ballot taken of the individual members of the Union?—I have heard that they have had the ballot, but I really could not say, because I have nothing to do with it.

8662. You cannot speak from personal knowledge on that subject?—I believe the ballot has been taken, but just how and what the result has been I am not prepared to say.

8663. But if you have not had any experience, or if you have not seen it in operation, what leads you to suspect that the ballot is not honestly taken?—From conversation with the men.

Mr. *Abraham*.

8664. I understood you to say, in answer to Mr. Balfour, that you had no special reasons upon which to base the opinion that the men were not in favour of the eight hours, only it was an impression made upon your mind?—That is so.

8665. You have no special reasons, no special testimony, no special fact?—I have no intercourse with the Union in any shape or form,

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

and I only go by the conversation amongst the men, the general feeling that prevails among them.

8666. You have also no special knowledge how the ballot was taken, only you have formed an impression in the same way as you have in regard to the men's opinion of the 48 hours?—I believe the eight hours must mean reduction in wages.

8667. Of course that is quite another point. You have made a statement, and we should like to know whether you have any special knowledge or any special fact upon which you could base the opinion which you have expressed; that is simply it?—Only by conversation amongst the men.

8668. Then if you could be convinced that an eight hours' legal day would not do away with the snap time, that would remove the difficulty with respect to the boys that you have spoken of, would it not?—I do not think it would remove a very great deal of difficulty, because there is an hour's winding gone; where is it going to be made up?

8669. You spoke of a special difficulty with the boys if the snap time was taken off; if you knew that it was not intended to deal with the snap time in any way different to what it is now by any legislative measure, would that remove the difficulty with respect to the boys?—I am quite convinced that the boys want a snap time, and there will have to be a time standing to provide for that.

8670. Then if that continues that would remove the difficulty, imaginary or otherwise, that you spoke of before the Commission just now?—I cannot see that the difficulty can be removed under a legal eight hours.

8671. Upon what have you formed your opinion that a legal eight hours will in any way deal with the snap time?—From the Act that I have heard is going to come into force, and the experience with the boys.

8672. Have you seen that Act?—No.

8673. You have not seen it?—No.

8674. Would you be surprised, then, if you found that that Act does not deal with the question at all?—As I understand it, the eight hours means from bank to bank, and the snap time would have to be abolished to meet the requirements of the owners of the colliery.

8675. Would you be surprised to know now as a fact that that proposed measure does not propose to deal with it at all?—As I am given to understand, it is from bank to bank.

8676. You have formed that opinion again upon what you have heard somewhere?—I have formed it on my own experience; on nothing else.

8677. You have not seen the proposed Bill, you said?—I have not seen the Bill, but I have heard many speeches on the Bill from the different miner's agents.

8678. You have not seen the Bill?—I have not seen the Bill.

8679. Then the opinion that you have formed that it would do away with snap time has been

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

formed on what you have heard outside of any special knowledge of the Bill itself?—As I take the legal eight hours, they ask to be from bank to bank. It will take at least half an hour to wind the men in and in some cases more, and it takes the same to wind them from the bottom to the top, and that means about six hours and a half winding. The deficiency is gone, the tonnage is gone. Where is it going to be made up? As I understand, the masters are not prepared to give that; that question will have to be dealt with later on, I suppose. The question is, are the masters prepared to give the extra amount for the hour and a half winding that is lost?

8680. You assume all that, but you have no special knowledge of any proposition in the proposed Bill to do away with the snap time?—I do not see where the snap time is to come in.

Mr. *Dale.*

8681. I think it is pretty clear that the witness has got an idea that in connexion with the legal limitation of the hours of colliery labour to eight hours from bank to bank there is going to be, if not by enactment, at any rate by arrangement, an abolition of the snap time, and if that were so he thinks that it would meet with great disfavour on the part of the boys. That is as far as you can carry it. Then, on the other hand, if there is no abolition of the snap time, but still a limitation to eight hours for underground labour, what in that case would be the effect in your judgment of such limitation?—I fail to see where the snap time is to come in.

8682. Never mind the snap time. Suppose that the hours of labour underground are by Act of Parliament reduced to eight from bank to bank, and that no mention is made of snap time at all, that snap time remains, as it is at present, a mere matter of local arrangement between the colliery owner and his men, what in your opinion would happen? It is your opinion, of course, I presume, that men could not work for eight hours without some snap time; is that so?—Yes, I am quite of that belief.

8683. Then in that case what would be the influence of a limitation to eight hours along with the maintenance of snap time?—Well, I think that there would be dissatisfaction amongst both the men and the boys.

8684. Why? It would not be dissatisfaction because of the abolition of snap time, because we are assuming it to be maintained. What would be the dissatisfaction then?—I am taking the fact that there certainly must be a standing point somewhere for lunch, and unless this is explained to me, the proper time for those boys to have this lunch and how it is going to be brought in, I cannot see how we are going to maintain the Eight Hours' Bill from bank to bank.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

8685. Do you mean that you do not see how you are to maintain the output or what? What we invite you to do is to give us, as the result of your long experience, an opinion as to what would be the effect upon the colliery operations in your district if the hours of underground labour were by Act of Parliament reduced—or we will not say by Act of Parliament—were reduced in any manner to eight from bank to bank but the present snap time was maintained; what would be the effect?—The present snap time could not really be maintained under the new regulations.

8686. It could be maintained, but you mean it could not be maintained consistently with same results that are now obtained?—That is so.

8687. Then in what manner would the present results be modified; would it be by lessened output, or what would it be?—Certainly it would lessen the output, and considerably.

Mr. *Abraham.*

8688. How many hours do you wind daily now?—Eight hours' winding.

8689. Eight hours only?—Yes.

8690. And you stop half an hour during the eight?—There is half an hour's interval, from half-past 11 to 12.

8691. Is that taken out of the eight hours' winding?—No; we start to turn at half-past 6; we stand from half-past 11 to 12, and then go on from 12 to 3.

8692. What would be eight hours' winding?—Eight hours' winding with half an hour snap time, and the coming in and out of the boys will take, as near as I can give it, about another quarter of an hour each way, in and out.

8693. Then if the snap time were taken away, it would not affect the winding time at your colliery?—There is the turning, there is the coming in and out of both the men and the boys to be considered.

8694. Whom do you represent here?—I represent myself.

8695. As a contractor?—As a contractor.

8696. Employing a number of boys whose time would be affected by any proposed measure to reduce the hours of labour?—Yes.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

8697. I understand that your objections to an eight hours' legal day are twofold; first, you think that if it had the effect of doing away with snap that would be injurious to the boys; and secondly, you think that it would so far reduce the output as to materially affect their wages?—I do.

8698. Is that a correct statement of your position?—Yes.

8699. And if it did away with snap time, it would still be necessary for the boys to have food at some time or another, and that time they would have to take as best they could?—Yes, that is so.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. JOHN BENNETT called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

8700. Are you a miner employed at the deep pit of the Swanwick Collieries, Alfreton ?—Yes.

8701. Are you a stallman ?—Yes.

8702. Are you a member of the Derbyshire Miners' Union ?—That is so.

8703. What are the hours now worked by the men ?—Eight hours.

8704. From bank to bank ?—We work eight hours.

8705. Can you tell me in the first place what are the number of hours from bank to bank of the main body of men—the hewers, the miners, whatever you call them in your locality ?—We commence to go down at a quarter to six in the morning, and we work till three o'clock and walk out in our own time.

8706. That is to say, the men first lowered are so lowered at a quarter to six ?—Yes.

8707. And the first men to come up begin to be wound up at what time ?—At three o'clock ; the first men would come up at three o'clock.

8708. They begin to ride at three ?—Yes.

8709. And they have all ridden up about what time ; about a quarter past three ?—About half-past three or a quarter to four.

8710. That gives an average of rather more than nine hours from bank to bank, does it not ? —Yes.

8711. From the time that the first man goes down to the time that the first man comes up would be about nine hours and a quarter, would it not ?—Yes, that is correct.

8712. What hours are worked by any other classes of underground men than those just mentioned ?—Do you mean road men and boys ?

8713. Yes, any other classes ?—They work about eight hours, just about eight hours altogether.

8714. Would you please still keep it from bank to bank ?—They do not go down quite as early as the road men do as a rule ; they go down about a quarter past six as a rule.

8715. And when do they come up ?—They come up the same time as the others, about a quarter past three.

8716. They work half an hour less. When you spoke a minute or two ago of the number of hours worked underground as distinct from the number of hours passed underground, what were you talking of ? From the time that a man is below ground from bank to bank, the time that was needful to be lowered, the time to reach his face or place, and his snap time, is that what you were deducting from the nine hours and a quarter ?—Yes, it is eight hours' working really ; we work just about eight hours.

8717. The eight hours does not include the snap time ?—No, just about eight hours.

8718. He works the eight hours exclusive of snap time ?—Yes.

8719. And exclusive of the time that it takes him to get from the day to his working place and back again ?—That is so.

8720. And supposing the hours underground were to be limited from bank to bank, what

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

effect would that have ?—We should work about six hours and a half then.

8721. I think it may be convenient really to assume that the arrangements for snap continue. Assuming the present arrangements for snap to continue, what effect would be produced by not permitting any man to be more than eight hours from bank to bank, to what extent would it reduce the actual working hours ?—It would bring them down to six and a half hours for the stallman ; the man that works at the face.

8722. Six and a half ?—Six and a half, or six and three-quarters, or something like that.

8723. Are the men in favour of this ?—I do not think so.

8724. You stated that you were a member of the Derbyshire Miners' Association ?—Yes.

8725. Has that association passed any resolutions on the subject of a limitation to eight hours ?—I believe they have.

8726. What resolutions have been so passed—what is the purport of them ?—I believe they have passed resolutions in favour of the eight hours from bank to bank, but I do not think there is much in it myself. I do not think it showed the correct feeling of the men ; this ballot paper does not.

8727. Do you think that notwithstanding that such resolutions have been passed the resolutions do not reflect or express the general feeling of the men ?—That is it.

8728. What leads you to that conclusion ?—Because of the way in which they are ballotted ; because of the way the ballot papers are drawn up, and everything there are open and free for everybody to see. That is a ballot paper ; there is no name signed or anything on it (*producing a ballot paper*).

8729. I think that is not the one you mean me to see ?—This is the right paper.

8730. It has nothing to do with the eight hours, has it ?—No, but this is the same form.

8731. This ballot paper reads thus, "Derby-"shire Miners' Association Labour Repre—"sentation Ballot Paper. Are you in favour of "starting a labour candidate for Parliament out "of the funds of the Miners' Association ?" Then there are two columns, the one headed "Yes," the other headed "No." "Place a cross "under the word 'yes' or 'no,' whichever you 'are in favour of." Then you desire us to understand that there was issued a similar ballot paper with a heading which presumably would run, "Are you in favour of a legislative eight hours' day ?" followed by the same form "yes," "no," with the direction to place a cross under the one or under the other according to the view of the person voting ?—Yes.

8732. And what inference do you draw from that ; what do you connect with the use of that particular form ?—I think the check weighman sees everyone of the papers when it is put in ; it is put in openly, and, of course, he can retaliate on the men if they do not come up to his wishes. That is where it is.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

8766. But what kind of influence; have the men anything to fear?—By advice, as a rule.

8767. If they act by the advice of the stallman or check-weighman it is because they think the advice is good advice?—Yes.

8768. Is it fair, under those circumstances, to say that their vote would really not represent their true opinion?—I think so.

8769. But they act by the advice?—Very often.

8770. They think the advice good?—Very often they do.

8771. And yet it does not represent their own opinion?—Yes.

8772. Therefore they are not convinced by the advice?—No.

8773. Are they afraid of anything that the stallman or the check-weighman might do to their prejudice? Has the stallman or check-weighman any power over them?—Yes, the stallman has power over them.

8774. And they are afraid that that power will be exercised to their disadvantage?—I do not think they always are; sometimes they are.

8775. You say that a legislative eight hours' day would reduce the working hours of the stallmen from eight to six and a half or six and three-quarters?—Yes.

8776. Six and three-quarters, I think, would be the figure, according to what you have told us?—Yes.

8777. Would the output of coal be reduced in proportion to the reduction of hours?—Yes.

8778. It would be reduced, but would it be reduced in proportion?—Yes.

8779. You do not think that, during those shorter hours, the stallmen might work harder and in that way compensate to some extent for the shorter time?—I do not think the stallman could, and if he were to attempt to do so he would endanger the lives of the men under him. I think the stallman is responsible for the safety of the men; he is supposed to look after them.

8780. You say you think that more rapid working would endanger the safety of the men; will you kindly explain that a little more in detail?—If the stallmen were to attempt to get the same amount of coal in six and a half hours as they do in eight hours now, they would be neglecting their own work and be getting coal instead of examining the roof, and so on.

8781. In your district the stallman's work includes repairing the stall?—Yes; timbering and so on.

8782. And you think that some of the time which is now spent in that important work would be given up to the extracting of the coal instead?—Yes.

8783. When you say that you think an Eight Hours' Bill would involve working the full day on Saturday, you are aware, of course, there is nothing said about that in the proposed Bill itself?—No.

8784. I understand you merely infer that that would be the probable result?—Yes.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

8785. You think that there would be a desire on the part of the owners to make up in that way for the reduction in the hours worked each day?—Yes.

Mr. *Burt.*

8786. Have you had many ballots taken on the eight hours' question?—No, we have only had one.

8787. How long ago?—Perhaps three months. I could not say exactly.

8788. Is your chief objection to the mode of the ballot that is not secret?—Yes.

8789. Would it not be impossible for the check-weighman or anyone else to distinguish one voting paper from another; there is no name appended to the votes?—No.

8790. So that to find out how each individual man voted you would have to open the ballot paper and look at it at the time, would you not?—Certainly.

8791. That would be rather difficult, would it not?—Yes.

8792. The check-weigher usually is the local secretary, I presume?—Yes.

8793. And he distributes the ballot papers among the men?—Yes.

8794. Then are they left in each man's hand for a certain time so that he may give the vote deliberately and bring it in again at a fixed time?—The papers are, as a rule, given to the stallman, and then he gives one to each man working under him and he signs it. Sometimes he takes it back himself and sometimes he gives it to the stallman to do it for him, that is how it is.

8795. There is not a uniform system of doing it?—No.

8796. You mentioned a speech of Mr. Haslam in which he expresses his regret that the miners of Derbyshire were not through their Union giving evidence before this Commission?—Yes.

8797. Did you hear that speech?—No, I read it.

8798. It was published in the newspapers?—Yes.

8799. And there is no reason to suppose it did not properly and correctly state Mr. Haslam's opinion, at least it has never been contradicted?—No.

Mr. *Abraham.*

8800. How is the check-weigher elected?—By the men.

8801. By the majority of the men?—Yes.

8802. Then if he did anything wrong could not the same majority remove him?—Certainly.

8803. What then have the majority of the men to fear from the check-weigher?—They do not fear him. They have nothing to fear from him unless he has a mind to divulge the names of men who have given these papers in contrary to their wishes.

8804. But if he did that would that be favoured by the body of the men?—I do not

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

know about that, but it creates a bad feeling among the men, I daresay, sometimes when they run contrary to each other.

8805. Would the body of the men support a check-weigher who would divulge a state of things that they themselves agreed should be kept secret?—I do not think so if it was brought before the general meeting.

8806. Then they have nothing to fear from him?—No, they have not. All that I said was that I do not think it was a fair method to have these ballot papers opened and used as they are.

8807. What is really meant by your complaint? Is it against the ballot principle or against the mode of carrying it out?—I think the ballot does not always show the true feelings of the men themselves.

8808. Can you suggest any better way in which persons should express their own opinions than by means of ballot papers?—I cannot say that I could.

8809. Upon what do you base your opinion that reducing the hours to eight per day would reduce the working hours to six and a half?—I suppose if it was from bank to bank we should go down at six and we should have to be all out by two to be eight hours from bank to bank really. I should allow half-an-hour for walking each way, and half-an-hour snap; that is an hour and a half off, but I give it as six hours and three-quarters, which is allowing a point.

8810. What time does it take now to put the men down and to raise them up per day?—They commence to lower the first batch of men down at a quarter to six, and they are all down by half-past.

8811. That is three-quarters of an hour?—Yes; but the reason why they commence to lower down at a quarter to six is because the stallmen have to be down by six to get the lamps out so as to examine the stall before the other men come.

8812. What we want to find out really is, what difference would the new state of things bring about as compared with the present state of things? What time is necessary now to put the men down and to bring them up every day?—It takes three-quarters of an hour at present.

8813. Three-quarters of an hour in the morning?—Yes.

8814. And three-quarters of an hour in the evening?—I daresay it is just about the same in the evening as it is in the morning.

8815. That would mean ten hours for some men?—That is the limit. I daresay we could get down in less time than three-quarters of an hour, but the stallman must be at his working place within such a time after the deputy or the fireman has been there. I daresay we could get down in half-an-hour.

8816. If you could get down in half-an-hour and get up in half-an-hour that would, of course, change your statement?—Yes.

8817. It would reduce the working hours by one hour only?—In eight hours from bank to bank we should commence to get down at six, and I am allowing half an hour to get to work.

8818. Do you represent anybody here?—No, only myself—a stallman.

8819. How is it you came here to give evidence?—I read the evidence given before the Commission with a great deal of interest, and I had an invitation sent me to give evidence.

8820. Did you express a desire to come here?—No.

8821. Were you invited to come here?—Yes.

8822. By whom?—I had a letter, I believe, from the Secretary of the Labour Commission.

8823. Have you a personal acquaintance with the Secretary?—No.

8824. How is it he became aware of your name and your opinion?—I do not know.

Mr. *Austin.*

8825. I think you said you were a member of the Miners' Association?—Yes.

8826. Previous to the voting on the eight hours' question, had you any complaint to make with regard to the procedure adopted for ascertaining the feelings of the men on any question?—No.

8827. How was it that you differed on this occasion over the same procedure?—Because I do not think it is a fair thing at all.

8828. Therefore you cannot complain of the course they took?—No.

8829. And if they voted by ballot for an eight hours' legal enactment it must fairly express the feelings of the miners of Derbyshire?—Yes.

Mr. *Livesey.*

8830. You say you were invited to come here by the Secretary, but how did the Secretary get your name?—I do not know, and I cannot say.

8831. Did any of your friends send up your name to the Commission and say that they thought you would make a good witness, or anything of that sort?—I do not know. I cannot answer that question.

8832. What sort of an invitation did you have?—I believe I had a telegram first and a printed invitation afterwards.

8833. What I want to get at is how your name came before the Commission; did someone send your name to the Commission and say you would make a good witness?—I am not able to say who sent my name.

8834. You did not write to offer yourself as a witness?—No.

8835. Of course you had a perfect right to do that if you liked?—Yes. There were many in favour of giving evidence.

8836. You mean of giving evidence themselves?—Yes, of themselves giving evidence. There were many in the place where I work and live.

Mr. *Mundella.*

8837. You say there are many of your colleagues and fellow workmen in Derbyshire who are in favour of giving evidence?—Yes.

Mr. *Mundella*—continued.

8838. Do you mean by that that there are many in favour of giving evidence against a legislative eight hours' day?—I cannot say about that; they are in favour of giving evidence before this Commission.

8839. Was there any vote ever taken on that question?—I do not think there has been.

8840. How do you know that they are in favour of giving evidence?—I have heard many say so. Mr. Haslam, the miners' agent for Derbyshire, said in his speech he much regretted that they were not giving evidence.

8841. You mean he expressed his regret that evidence was not forthcoming to this Commission?—Yes.

8842. You say there was a ballot taken, as I understand; was that ballot as to whether you should give evidence or as to whether you should go in for an Eight Hours' Bill?—It was as to whether we should go in for an Eight Hours' Bill.

8843. Do you know the numerical proportions in favour of and against it?—No, I do not, according to the ballot.

8844. You have no idea of what proportion the majority bear to the minority?—No, none.

8845. Was it not published?—I have never seen it in print.

Mr. *Mundella*—continued.

8846. Is there any considerable minority against the eight hours?—Yes, eight hours from bank to bank.

8847. You think there is a considerable minority against it?—Yes; but I am not speaking generally; I am speaking about the colliery where I work. We are under a very good system in that colliery. Every day provides for itself; we should really work eight hours and four hours on Saturday.

8848. In your own colliery you think there is a considerable number opposed to a legislative eight hours' day?—I think they would be opposed to having to work a full day on Saturday more than anything.

8849. You mean they would be opposed to a 48 hours' week?—Yes.

8850. And you are opposed to it?—Yes, we work 44 hours now.

8851. Has there ever been any application made on behalf of the miners generally in your district for any reduction of hours?—Not at the colliery where I work at.

8852. You are in a union, are you not?—Yes.

8853. Do you know whether the Derbyshire Unions have made any applications to the employers for a reduction of the hours of labour in collieries within the last two or three years?—I do not know that they have.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. BENJAMIN MORRIS called and examined.

Mr. *Dale.*

8854. What is your connexion with the colliery district of Derbyshire?—I am a colliery deputy.

8855. Employed at what colliery?—Blackwell Colliery Company.

8856. You state in your letter that you desire to give evidence on various points, and the first appears to be unionism and its benefits. Are you a member of the Derbyshire Miners' Union?—I am.

8857. What do you desire to say on the subject of trade unionism?—I desire to say I have had a very large experience in connexion with miners' unions, and that rightly conducted they are conducive to the benefit of the men, and they are also conducive to a good feeling existing between the employers and employed. When they have leaders who lead them wisely, and do not take rash steps, my experience teaches me that unionism is of vast benefit to the miners and also of benefit to the employers. They have a mode of settling disputes through their union agents when a Union is in existence, while, when a Union is not in existence, we are more liable to petty strikes and such difficulties as that. I have always found that trade unions are a very great advantage.

8858. Is the Derbyshire Miners' Union a strong one?—Yes, it is.

8859. Has there been any important strike within the area of that Union of late years?—No, not within this last 16 years.

8860. How have your wages' questions been settled, questions in regard to changes in wages

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

resulting from states of trade affecting the whole district?—The Coal Owners' Association generally meet at a time of bad trade, and then, trade being depressed, and coal being reduced in price, they have generally given notice of reduction, and, of course, we have had to submit to it.

8861. Has the Owners' Association or its representatives met the Miners' Union or its representatives?—In the first place the coal owners would meet among themselves, and then the representatives of the men would meet them.

8862. And then both sides would discuss matters?—Yes.

8863. And so far have they been able, of late years at any rate, to come to an arrangement or agreement without any strike resulting?—That is so.

8864. Have you had any sliding scale in your district?—We have not within my experience, and I have been in Derbyshire about 18 years.

8865. In what manner are local disputes or questions dealt with?—The miners' delegates meet every month, and when there is a dispute in connexion with any colliery that dispute is taken to the local lodge, and the man aggrieved states his case before his local lodge, and then the delegate from that local lodge is empowered by the lodge to take the grievance to the central council or to the delegate meeting that meets once a month; and then that case is gone into at that meeting, and of course the agent as a rule is deputed by that meeting to meet the employer in order to settle the grievance.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

would get up sooner provided the men would be out earlier.

8887. Do you mean if the men would leave their working places sooner?—Yes, that is what I mean.

8888. Do you mean they linger in order to make a better day's work?—I do not think they linger; I do not think that at all. Some of them have no watches, and they work a good way, perhaps, from a man who has a watch, and they would hardly know what the time is; and, therefore, they would think it was not 4 o'clock when, as a matter of fact, it was, perhaps, 20 minutes past.

8889. What have you to say on the subject of the hours of labour being regulated by combined effort?—I am most certainly opposed to a legal eight hours. I am very much in favour of short hours—very much in favour of eight hours by combination. But the legal eight hours I am very much opposed to for various reasons. The first is that it would be a very great injustice to the men themselves. The second is the legal enactment could not possibly be carried out in the case of a miners' work. The work of a miner is of such a character that the miner could not leave his work at a given moment—not at all times I mean—because he never knows for five minutes what is going to call for his attention or what is going to take place; and my experience as a miner has led me to understand this—that if there is a law passed to prohibit me from keeping my tool in my hand and doing any kind or manner of work after a certain time, it would not only be an injustice to me, but it would be a great loss to me at times; and if I am bound by the present law that is now in existence to do certain things this difficulty will arise. Of course the Mines' Regulation Act imposes on us certain obligations to pay attention to various things in connexion with the miners' work; and if that be so, and a legal eight hours comes into force, the two laws will clash, and the miner must either be continually summoned or he must certainly break the law.

8890. Are you in favour of a limitation by arrangement of the present hours of underground labour?—I am.

8891. To what extent?—Eight hours' coal-turning seems to me to be reasonable and fair between employers and employed; and the eight hours' turning would meet the requirements of the markets, &c.

8892. At present the coal-turning hours with you are nine?—No, eight.

8893. At present they are eight hours?—Eight.

8894. You begin your coal-turning at seven, do not you?—Yes.

8895. And I thought you left off at four?—Yes; but I forgot to qualify that. Out of that we stay off half an hour for meal time; and then we work an extra half an hour every day in order to leave work at 12 on Saturday; and we are paid a full day for it. That is a local arrangement that exists at nearly all the collieries in our district; and I was very surprised to hear it did not exist at the collieries where my friends [the two preceding witnesses] work.

Mr. *Dale*—continued.

8896. When you say you work an extra half an hour I still only have seven to four, minus half an hour of snap?—We leave off work, you see, at 12 o'clock on Saturday, and that takes the half an hour off the remainder of the day.

8897. On the days other than Saturday—Monday to Friday inclusive—is your coal-turning time seven to four with half an hour's interval?—That is so.

8898. That is eight and a half hours?—That is eight and a half hours.

8899. You are in favour of that being reduced by arrangement to eight hours?—Quite so. Of course, I should like to say I fully understand the gravity of the meal-time question. I have worked in Nottinghamshire, and, if you would permit me, I would like to give you my experience so far as meal time is concerned. In Nottinghamshire the men have a system at most of the collieries of not stopping any meal time at all. They get it how they can. When I worked there, at the pit where that system was carried out, I took very ill; and the doctor who attended there was a field doctor, and he said, "It is surprising the number of cases I "have like yours at this colliery." I said, "Yes, "doctor, and if I stay here much longer I shall "soon be dead." He said I was suffering from indigestion. I was then working for somebody else—I was not working on my own account—I was working for some stallman, and if I was 10 minutes swallowing my victuals, the stallman would commence to shout; and I had to hurry myself, and eat my meal in the greatest haste. I say that hurrying over the meals was conducive to ill-health among the men; and, therefore, if there were no regulation meal time allowed it would be to the men's great disadvantage.

8900. Are you under the impression that the advocates of a legal eight hours' day propose to couple with that the abolition of meal time?—I shall be very pleased indeed to be convinced that they are not in favour of abolishing the meal time; but so far as I have been led to understand yet that is not so. In fact Mr. Pickard, in his speech before the Coal Owners' Association in London, on this very question, distinctly told them that he went in for eight hours' continuous work, and no meal time whatever allowed. Those were Mr. Pickard's own words.

Mr. *Abraham.*

8901. That was a mistake?—I would like now to give a little of my experience about the ballot. I am hardly satisfied with the way my friends have given evidence before the Commission on that question; and I think it would be unfair for me to leave this chair without putting before the Commission a little clear evidence on that point. Of course, I belong to the Derby-

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

8913. And that Government should add one member to that board ?—Yes.

8914. The whole board consisting of three ?—Yes.

8915. And would you propose to give the board any powers to enforce its decisions ?—By all means, or it would be useless.

8916. What sort of powers ?—I have no doubt that wiser heads than mine would devise some way of carrying it out.

8917. Is not that shirking rather a difficult problem ?—I quite understand the difficulty, but at the same time I do think our legislators will be able to define some means.

8918. Do not you think that a board which is appointed by mutual agreement between employers and employed, would be more likely to come to a decision satisfactory to all parties than one that was imposed upon the district by the Government ?—We have seen so many failures in that direction in the past, and I think if one were appointed by Government it would make it more firm, more binding. Men would be more desirous of accepting the decision of the arbitrator. Suppose the Government appointed an arbitrator, the men would feel themselves in duty bound to accept the decision either way, simply because it was officially done.

8919. You think they would feel themselves more in duty bound to accept the decision arrived at by a board which had been imposed upon them than by a board which they themselves had voluntarily joined with the employers in establishing ?—I can hardly allow that word to pass as to its being "imposed," because I really think that the men themselves would agree to it. I think they would be quite agreeable to such a board. I can hardly allow the word.

8920. You think the difficulty is only on the employers' side ?—I think the employers would also agree to it. I think they would.

8921. If there is that readiness on both sides to agree to the establishment of a board, surely it may be done voluntarily. It would only be necessary for Government to interfere in the case of unwillingness in the district to establish a board on its own account ?—You might qualify it in that way, provided the district could not succeed in getting a settlement, then the board should take the matter up, sooner than have a strike.

8922. Now with regard to the question of a legal eight hours, I understand you do not object to a reduction of the hours to eight ?—I do not.

8923. By that, however, you do not mean a reduction of the hours to eight from bank to bank ?—I mean eight hours' coal-turning.

8924. On these ballot papers of which you have spoken to us, was the expression "eight hours" used without being further defined ?—It was.

8925. Can you tell us the exact words on the ballot paper ?—I can. They are the same words as appear upon that ballot paper that has been handed up to the Chairman, only it was in connexion with the legal eight hours, instead of the question that was on that paper that has been handed round. It said, "Are you in favour of an eight hours by Act of Parliament ?" and then the second question was, "Are you against eight hours by Act of Parliament ?"

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

8926. Then you told us that every miner in your district was in favour of an eight hours' day ?—I do not say everyone. There is a considerable minority.

8927. Am I to conclude, putting these two statements together, that the miners in your district understood by an eight hours' day an eight hours' day of coal turning, or an eight hours' day from bank to bank ?—There has been a great misunderstanding among the men. They really did not believe that if the law was imposed upon them there would be the restrictions placed upon them that really would be placed upon them, and that being the case they readily voted for it, all being in favour of working the eight hours, thinking and feeling it was quite long enough for a man to be in the pit.

8928. Your view is, then, that the vote which was given was really a vote in favour of an eight hours' day of coal turning, and that the question whether it should be imposed by Parliament, or should be obtained by the Trades Unions in the various districts, was not considered as an essential matter at all ?—It was considered by the officials of the Union to be an essential matter.

8929. But not by the men who voted ?—I do not think it expressed the feelings of the men.

8930. Therefore, in your opinion, the statement that that vote was a vote given in favour of a legal eight hours' day from bank to bank would be misleading ?—I think it would.

Mr. *Burt.*

8931. You mentioned that the colliery at which you work is a large one. How many persons are employed altogether ?—At the seam where I work the average is 370.

8932. The total number of men and boys ?—Yes.

8933. Underground ?—Underground.

8934. The extreme time from the beginning of the descending till the last of the men come up would be about ten hours, or rather over ten hours. Would that be typical of the district as a whole, or would that be exceptional ?—I think it would not be typical of the whole district. Men could get out sooner if they would only come out sooner. There is no reason why they should not be able to get out a deal earlier than that.

8935. The employers would throw no impediment at all in the way of their coming out earlier if they cared to do so ?—No; on the contrary I may say, that we have just had to enforce a rule to prohibit the men from coming out during the time of turning coal and thronging the pit bottom so much before 4 o'clock, so that the man about the bottom could not get about his work with safety, and our manager has had to stick a notice up prohibiting the men from get-

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

ting round the bottom before 4 o'clock on account of that one thing. There are men who are in the habit of coming out early, and then there are others who linger at the far end stopping to do various pieces of work, and do not come out till later.

8936. Are the boys and others employed in the getting of the coal out from the face to the shaft employed longer than the coal-getters as a rule?—No. Of course the boys as a rule get up a bit earlier. They get to know the time to leave off a bit sooner than the men, and they get to the bottom earlier, and they get up earlier.

8937. You spoke about a strong feeling in favour of old men's pensions; are there any funds of that kind established in your district in connexion with the miners' fund or any fund?—Yes, the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund, I believe, provides old men with about 5*s.* a week. I think that is about the sum. That is of course only paid to those who are in the society. But I have heard great complaints from old men. I may say, if you will permit me, that only recently one old man paid me a visit at my house, and brought a grievance before me that he had against a society, and he wished me to put his case before the public in the papers. Of course I refused to do so. But there seems to be a dissatisfaction among some of them, especially among the old men. They think the allowance is not enough, that they ought to have more. I am not a member of the society myself, and I should be very sorry to say anything detrimental, as I believe that it does an immense lot of good.

8938. Are the miners in your district largely connected with it?—They are not so largely connected with it as I myself, as an impartial observer, would like to see them. I believe their numbers are, however, gradually increasing.

8939. You are not representing anybody here; you have not been appointed by deputies or by the members of the association in any way?—The reason why I am here to-day is this: I have all my life taken great interest in anything that has anything whatever to do with my fellow workmen, and the delegates from the various lodges in our district passed a motion at one of our council meetings at Chesterfield authorising our agents, Messrs. Haslam and Harvey, to come before this Commission to give evidence on their behalf. Unfortunately Mr. Haslam was called away on other business, and did not go to that federation meeting. Perhaps I have hardly made myself clear. The delegates empowered our agents to go to the miners' federation meeting and support a motion in favour of coming here to give evidence, and unfortunately Mr. Haslam was not able to attend that federation meeting, and Mr. Harvey went alone; and although our men, through the mouth of their own delegates, wished to be represented here, and authorised Mr. Harvey to vote in favour of giving evidence here, he went and voted against giving evidence here. Then, when Mr. Haslam was made aware that the federation had decided not to give evidence, in the very first speech that

Mr. *Burt*—continued.

he delivered before the miners he used some very strong language in reference to that. He said he was decidedly against any such thing being done, and that the miners' case ought to be brought before the Commission. Feeling that all the evidence ought to be brought before this Commission, I wrote a letter, I believe, to Lord Hartington, in the first place, offering my services to the Commission by tendering evidence here. That is how I come to be here.

8940. You volunteered to give evidence?—Yes.

8941. And then I gather from your last answer that, so far as the Derbyshire district itself is concerned, the district was rather in favour than otherwise of giving evidence before this Commission?—Yes.

Mr. *Abraham.*

8942. I understand that you are not only a member of the Union, but that you have taken a leading part for several years?—I have done in years past. I do not know now.

8943. Do you think that the men were not well informed as to the difference between an eight hours by legal enactment and an eight hours' day by amicable arrangement?—That is what I do believe—that they were not well informed.

8944. Has that question not been discussed very largely in your district?—It has been discussed; but as I said before what would really prove to be the restrictions placed upon the men's labour have never been brought before the men at all, and they really did not believe that it would place any restrictions upon them only so far as the coal-turning was concerned.

8945. Is it not a fact that up to a certain period, that is to say, before your district associations joined the federation of Great Britain, your agents were only in favour of reducing the hours by an amicable arrangement between employers and employed?—One of our own agents is in favour of reducing the hours by combination to-day rather than by law. Mr. Haslam has distinctly declared that he only goes for it because the federation has passed a resolution to that effect, and that he feels himself bound to be loyal to them.

8946. But it is a fact that that was the state of things in your district until you joined the federation?—Yes.

8947. After you joined the federation and adopted another policy were not the men aware of that change of policy?—I do not think that they were thoroughly aware of the change of policy. I am of course speaking personally. Of course I am committing no one, but from what I heard among them I do not think that they were thoroughly aware of the change of policy that took place, and the consequences of it.

8948. How long have those district associations been members of the federation?—Probably I shall be about correct in saying two years.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

8949. Not more?—I do not think it is more. I do not think it would exceed two years.

8950. And during those two years is it your opinion that the men were not made aware of this change of policy?—I think they were not distinctly.

8951. Again with respect to the eight hours from bank to bank and the eight hours' drawing of coal, have you the same opinion also that the men in that case were not aware of the difference?—Yes, that is so.

8952. You said you took part in union work in that district some years ago?—Not in that district; I did not say it was in that district.

8953. What district was it?—My native place is Warwickshire. I have acted as a delegate for the lodge I was in connexion with in Staffordshire.

(*Mr. Gerald Balfour here took the chair.*)

8954. You know what was going on then with respect to the reduction of hours in 1885, 1886, and 1887?—I know that the men were in favour of a reduction of hours, but I always understood from the men themselves, and from what I could glean of their views, that they were in favour of it by combination.

8955. I am now referring to the difference of the eight hours' winding coal and eight hours from bank to bank; were you yourself and the men not aware that the agitation for some years has been for the eight hours from bank to bank?—Oh, I am quite aware of that. That lately has been the agitation among the leaders of the men. I am not here to say it is so among the men, because the men have expressed themselves frequently in my hearing to the effect that they do not believe in an eight hours from bank to bank.

8956. Are we to suppose for a moment that the leaders of the men do not reflect the opinion of the men in cases like this?—It would be hard for me to sit here and say that, but one cannot close one's ears to the sayings that the men make use of among themselves, and it is that which I am repeating to you now. I should not like to cast any reflection whatever upon the agent in any shape or form. If the agents get the majority of votes at any meeting, we are justified in saying that the agents are reflecting the opinions of the men.

8957. Are you of opinion that they have not had a sufficient majority to justify them in carrying on the agitation for reducing the hours from bank to bank?—I would not like to say that, because, when the ballot was taken, it showed quite a contrary result to that.

8958. Are you not aware that in 1886, at a conference held at Edinburgh, the hours were distinctly stated as being from bank to bank?—I am quite aware that the question was brought before the conference, that it should be from bank to bank.

8959. You are aware that the agents of this district were present at that meeting, and took part in it?—Quite so.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

8960. Did not they, in addressing their men explain to the men that the reduction of the hours proposed was from bank to bank, as pointed out in that resolution?—I have heard our own agents say: "Mind, you men, the eight "hours from bank to bank means no coming in "on Friday night." That is how I have heard them explain it.

8961. Have you not heard your agents tell these men that the proposed reduction of hours was eight hours from bank to bank?—Quite so.

8962. Wherein comes the misunderstanding between reducing the hours from bank to bank, and reducing them to eight hours' winding?—Undoubtedly there is a misunderstanding among the men. They did not think that by stopping off a certain time the law would have any effect upon them at all. That was undoubtedly the opinion among a number of the men until recently. In fact, I have conversed with men myself, and have said: "Now look here, if the "law steps in and prohibits you from working "more than eight hours, you would have to "stop this," and the answer I have got is, "How "is that." I have replied, "Simply because it "will be a legal enactment, and if you stay "over the time it will be illegal and you will "be breaking the law." Then they have said they did not know that.

8963. Then you would wish to explain that in your opinion the men did not thoroughly understand what would be the result of a legal enactment?—That is my meaning.

8964. What proportion of the men in the colliery that you are working in do not avail themselves of the opportunity of coming up from the pit at 4 o'clock?—Not a very large proportion of them. Perhaps 20 of them are generally late.

8965. And as to how many of those would it be necessary that they should remain in?—I could not answer that question, because I am not there to see what they are doing and what is calling for their attention. It may be that some of the men that have come out earlier have had their attention called to the very same things.

8966. How many days in the year have you, as a miner, found it necessary to stay in your stall beyond the recognised time of working?—I have found it necessary many times as a practical man.

8967. Could you give us an idea of how many days in the month it would be?—It would be hardly fair to hazard an opinion upon that, because I never expected to have to give an opinion upon the question, but I have often had to stay.

8968. You are hardly prepared then to say to what extent the working of the colliery would be prevented from being carried out properly if an Act were passed to compel men to leave their places at a certain time?—I could not hazard an opinion as to what the extent would be. Suffice it to say it would in my opinion make a very material difference.

Mr. *Abraham*—continued.

8969. If it was provided that in case of emergency men should be allowed to remain in to do necessary repairs, would that meet the case?—It would indeed. I know the drift of your question, and I have had that in my mind. If there is a proviso made of allowing men to stay in to do work of various kinds, it would only tend to cause the law to be broken with impunity.

8970. I said in regard to cases of emergency?—Yes, but they could all say it was a case of emergency, and nobody would be there to witness what kind of work was done. They could say so-and-so, and the law would be evaded and broken continually.

8971. If you are not there how is it that you are able to say that these men simply lingered behind?—I did not say they were lingering; I certainly did not mean to say they were lingering through idleness. I mean they were staying to do work that called for their attention, and which it would be to their advantage to do.

8972. It could be done in less time if they remained in?—I daresay it might be so sometimes. What I wish to impress upon this Commission is this, that sometimes 20 minutes' work would save a miner half an hour, and sometimes two hours' work the next morning; and probably he might not have had an opportunity of doing that work until four o'clock. He might be busily engaged at something else while the turning was going on, and if he was prohibited from doing that then he would be put to a lot of extra work the next morning simply because he had not the privilege of doing a little work before he left.

Mr. *Mundella.*

8973. Then you are of opinion, I gather, that with such an elastic clause as that which has been referred to, which would enable the men to work in case of emergency, the legal enactment as to eight hours could not be carried out?—Yes, that is so.

8974. You think if there were a provision for cases of emergency those cases would so often arise in individual instances that it would practically nullify the law?—Quite so.

8975. I understood you to say that you are distinctly in favour of an eight hours' day?—Yes.

8976. Do you mean an eight hours' turning day or an eight hours' from bank to bank?—I mean eight hours of coal turning.

8977. You said that you did not consider that the ballot was put so lucidly before the men as it should have been with the result that it did not quite express their opinions?—Yes.

8978. It was not put to them thus: "Are you "in favour of an eight hours' day? Do you wish "it to be by Act of Parliament, or do you wish "it to be by combination"?—That would have been more satisfactory.

8979. But that was not put?—No, it was not.

8980. The whole question was, "Are you in "favour of an eight hours' day by Act of Parliament, or are you against an eight hours' "day by Act of Parliament"?—Quite so.

Mr. *Mundella*—continued.

8981. And therefore, in your opinion, the men, if they had voted against an eight hours' day by Act of Parliament would have felt they were voting against an eight hours' day?—That is my opinion.

8982. Have you in your district ever approached the employers with a view to bring the labour within the eight hours' limit?—Not in our district. I do not recollect its being done, not as a district.

8983. You have never formulated a demand upon the employers through your Union?—No, we have not.

8984. You have not said, "We wish to work an eight hours' day"?—No, we have not.

8985. Is there any reason why you should not do that?—There is not. I have always thought that we ought to have done it long before now, and so cease the agitation.

8986. And you think probably if you had done it, you might have secured the eight hours' day some time since?—I do.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

8987. What do I understand to be the length of your present day?—We work eight hours now reckoning Saturday the short day. Men work till 12 on Saturday, and then they are paid full pay for it, on account of working an extra half hour by mutual agreement between employer and employed each day during the week, and by so doing they are enabled to leave on Saturday early to allow their wives to go to market and so on, and it makes up for it.

8988. Is that a satisfactory arrangement for the men?—Very satisfactory; very indeed. The men would not like to give it up.

8989. In that case I understand you have already practically got an eight hours' day?—Yes.

8990. Therefore there would be no necessity in your district to approach the employers with a view to obtain it, as you have it already?—I fail to see where the necessity would be. That is eight hours' coal-turning.

Mr. *Mundella.*

8991. At present yours is eight hours' work, and not eight hours from bank to bank. You said, I think, in your examination in chief that you would like the hours reduced to eight by arrangement?—Yes.

Mr. *Gerald Balfour.*

8992. Do you mean eight from bank to bank?—No; I do not think it would meet the requirements of the market at all. To reduce the hours to eight from bank to bank would mean this: the men would be walking in and out in their masters' time, instead of walking in and out in their own time; consequently they would have to be paid for walking in and out from their work in their masters' time. I may perhaps be allowed to further explain myself in this way:—

Mr. *Gerald Balfour*—continued.

Stallmen — contractors — who have had men working under them, sometimes seven men and sometimes less, pay them at present an average wage of about 6*s.*; and supposing you adopt a system of eight hours from bank to bank it would mean a considerable reduction from these men's time in turning coal; consequently they would not be able to pay the same amount of wage to their day men unless they get a material advance upon their contract; and, as a matter of fact, the day men express themselves as totally against any reduction; and the stallmen say, "Well, if it comes off, we shall have to reduce you unless we get a substantial rise," and that is where dissatisfaction exists.

8993. In order to be quite clear upon this, what you desire is not an eight hours' day from bank to bank, but an eight hours' day of coal-turning?—Quite so.

8994. And that you practically have in your district at the present time?—Yes, that we practically have.

Mr. *Mundella.*

8995. You gave us a graphic description of the bad effects of hurrying over meals; you think that is a very bad thing?—I do.

8996. Suppose you had a legislative eight hour day from bank to bank, I suppose the necessity for hurrying over meals would be rather increased, would it not; there would be great pressure?—There would be great pressure unless there were a proviso to meet that in some shape or form.

8997. If the time was eight hours from bank to bank, and you took a certain amount of leisure out of that for meals, you would again reduce the working time considerably, would you not?—Precisely so.

8998. Therefore the pressure would be, would it not, for a reduction of the meal-time?—Quite so.

8999. What are your ordinary meal times now?—We cease turning coal from half past 11 to 12.

9000. You have half an hour for your dinner?—Yes.

9001. You think less than that would be objectionable?—I do, indeed.

9002. You heard Mr. Abraham say that it was a mistake to advocate a continuous working without a meal time; are you quite satisfied that there has been an advocacy of working all through their meal times?—I am satisfied that the papers so reported it.

9003. Have any of your leaders spoken in favour of such a system?—Yes.

9004. They advocate that you are to go down the mine and work quite through without any stoppage for meals?—Yes, the statement to the men was that the men should get their meals as they could.

9005. That would be very injurious to health, would it not?—Yes.

9006. You said, I think, you wrote a letter to the press as to the ballot papers?—I do not think I said that exactly, but what I wrote embraced that question. I was dealing with the general topics about the eight hours.

Mr. *Mundella*—continued.

9007. Was that letter sent to any newspaper in your district?—Yes, circulated all round the district.

9008. What paper did you send it to?—The "Alfreton Journal."

9009. And that circulated in your district?—It did.

9010. Did it elicit much opposition?—It did not. I think there was one letter in reply from one of the agents, and I think only one.

9011. There is perfect freedom among yourselves to discuss these questions, is there not. There is no opposition to a man who takes a different view?—I am very thankful to you for putting that question. I may say that because I have taken the active part I have in this matter my name has been used before the men at the various meetings that have been held in a way that it ought not to have been used, and so created bad feeling at one time, though I am glad to say that bad feeling has now died away. That is the complaint I have against our agents for not allowing others to express different opinions without heaping odium upon them for so doing.

9012. You said something in favour of a board of conciliation or arbitration being established by Government; have you had any experience whatever of voluntary boards of conciliation and arbitration?—I have never been on any board of conciliation myself. It is just simply my own thought upon the matter and from conversations I have had with my fellow workmen that such a board would be useful.

9013. Have you ever worked in any district where you have been governed by such a board?—Yes, I believe I have.

9014. Where?—In Staffordshire, I believe. I believe there was a conciliation board formed there at one time. I would not like to speak positively upon the matter, but I believe there was.

9015. You said that you had seen so many failures in the past with respect to boards of arbitration and conciliation that you doubted whether a voluntary arrangement would be effective. Have you seen the failure of any such board within your own experience?—There has been failure in districts which I have not been in.

9016. Have you had any personal experience of any failure?—I could not say that I have had personal experience of failures. I speak now of what I had read in the newspapers. I can mention one case of failure within recent years, when there was an arbitration appointed, selected by the employers and the employed. It was when Judge Ellison, the county court judge at Sheffield, was elected arbitrator for the men.

9017. What was the result?—The result was that it was not satisfactory to one of the parties (I believe it was the employer), and the consequence was that some of them would not bow to the arbitrator's decision.

Mr. *Mundella*—continued.

9018. You say that it was the employers who were dissatisfied on that occasion?—I believe so.

9019. Some of them were recalcitrant?—I believe so.

9020. Do not you know that they were brought in?—Well, it caused a great deal of friction and unpleasantness.

9021. Are you aware that both employers and employed, when they have been recalcitrant, have not been supported by their own body, and have had to come in afterwards to the general arrangement?—It may be so.

9022. There are always, are there not, some people who are not satisfied with a decision when it goes against them?—That is so.

9023. You seem to have given a good deal of thought and attention to this subject, and I will ask you, do not you think that such boards as those which Mr. Burt has referred to, where the workmen appoint their own representatives and the employers theirs, and the two parties select their own umpire, are better calculated to inspire the confidence of the workmen and the employers than a board which is established in whole or in part by Government?—By all means I would prefer, in the first instance, boards in connexion with the men themselves, but in case of any failure of a settlement then I think a Government arbitrator should be called in.

9024. How would the Government arbitrator compel men to work if they did not like to work?—I would not like to answer that question. I should leave the working of that out to wiser heads.

9025. I am supposing that the Government arbitrator had given his decision, and given it, say, in favour of the men, and then that the employers said, "We cannot afford to work our pits," and they shut them down; what could you do in that case?—It would be very difficult. I quite recognise the difficulty.

9026. It is an impossibility, is it not, to enforce an award of that kind, unless it is through public opinion?—It is very difficult, I admit. I quite recognise the difficulty in the matter.

9027. You have said that one of your leaders at least is in favour of an eight hours' day by combination?—Yes.

9028. And that there is a minority of men on the same side?—Yes.

9029. You are not unanimous upon the question?—We are not.

Mr. *Livesey.*

9030. You think if such an Act came into operation practical difficulties would render it impossible to carry it out?—I do.

9031. You have spoken of old age pensions. Have you ever thought of the possibility of old age pensions being managed by the workmen in conjunction with their employers, instead of by the Government?—Yes, I have thought of that; but the difficulty is this: it would not be sufficiently stable. If Government enforced it there would be stability about it. That is my impression. I have found no one yet who has expressed any dissatisfaction at the Government taking the matter up. There has been no such dissatisfaction, at least in my district, where I have ventilated the question well. In fact I may say that Mr. Chamberlain having taken such a prominent part in these questions has given great satisfaction to the working men.

9032. Are they quite prepared for compulsory contributions?—No; I think if it could be sufficiently elastic, and not altogether compulsory, the benefits accruing from it would be so great that there would be no need to compel it. I think workmen would willingly subscribe to it. I should rather see it elastic, and that there should not be so much of the compulsory feeling about it.

9033. It must be either voluntary or compulsory, must it not?—Certainly it must be the one or the other but supposing there were a poll taken of the various works up and down the country I think it might be arranged that those who did not feel disposed to pay to it need not do so.

9034. Some men I have had to do with have been quite in favour of making it compulsory?—My own feelings lead me somewhat against compulsion in almost anything.

9035. Would it not be somewhat difficult to work it on a voluntary system?—Perhaps it would be; I can quite understand that it would be.

9036. There is one other question which I will ask you, seeing the great attention you have given to many other things. Have you ever thought whether it would be possible to introduce any system of profit sharing in coal mining?—I have thought that question over when I have seen the question brought before the public; but I do not think any good would come from it. I do not think it could be beneficially carried out.

9037. You do not think it practical in coal mining?—I do not.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Tuesday, January 19th, 1892.

List of Documents—*continued.*

Document handed in.	No. of Appendix. Vol. I. Evidence, Group A.	No. of Question. Vol. I. Evidence, Group A.	Witness.
Table showing increase in the production by the men working longer time.	—	2397	Mr. R. Young.
Table showing the average number of persons employed per death per year in Northumberland and the United Kingdom for the years 1874 to 1880, 1881 to 1887, and 1888 to 1890.	—	2427	,,
Rules of the Northumberland and Durham Miners' Permanent Relief Fund Friendly Society.	—	2477	Mr. W. Steele.
Last Annual Report of the Relief Fund Friendly Society	—	2478	,,
Four tables showing :— (1.) Number of members at the end of stated periods. (2.) Scale of contributions and benefits. (3.) Number of fatal accidents (1862–1890), and amounts paid in respect thereof. (4.) Particulars of Superannuation Fund.	—	2478	,,
Circular addressed by the Board of Management of the Northumberland and Durham Miners' Permanent Relief Fund to the Owners of Mineral Royalties (dated August 8th, 1890).	9	2487	,,
Document showing the last sliding scale, the proposed new scale, and also the *modus operandi* of obtaining the selling price of coal by accountants.	—	2605	Mr. W. H. Lambton
Report setting forth the wages, hours, and conditions of labour in the districts embraced by the National Federation of Enginemen's Protective Associations.	—	2631	,,
Summary of cases dealt with (1886–90) by the Northumberland Coal Trade Joint Committee.	10	2886	Mr. J. G. Weeks.
Table showing estimated earnings per annum (1877–90) of coal hewers.	—	2892	,,
Per-centage of time lost by hewers lying idle (1873–90)	—	2895	,,
Rules of Northumberland Coal Trade Joint Committee -	11	2896	,,
Minutes of the Northumberland Coal Trade Joint Committee (dated September 19th, 1891, taken as a type).	12	2896	,,
Rules of Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Association, and also Rules of the Walker Colliery Branch.	—	3272	Mr. G. Jaques.
Rules and Regulations of the Blairhall Colliery Company.	—	3900	Produced by Mr. Tait when examining Mr. J. Weir.
Sliding scale agreement (January 1st, 1892) between the Colliery Owners and Workmen of the Monmouthshire and South Wales District.	13	4602	Referred to by Sir W. Lewis during evidence of Mr. I. Evans.
Comparative table showing statistics of fatal accidents in mines, hours worked, and amounts of mineral wrought.	—	5014 5153 5196	Mr. A. Onions.
Tabulated account of slag picked out of coal both before and after the strike.	—	5439 5440	Mr. T. Richards.
Rules of the South Wales Miners' Permanent Relief Fund.	—	5460	,,

List of Documents—*continued.*

Document handed in.	No. of Appendix. Vol. I. Evidence, Group A.	No. of Question. Vol. I. Evidence, Group A.	Witness.
Rules of the Midland District Miners' Fatal Accident Relief Society, Report of the Actuary, and Statement of Accounts.	—	7296	Mr. J. P. White.
Minutes of Proceedings at Joint Conferences on the Eight Hours' Question (held January 21st and February 11th, 1891) between Representative Coal Owners and the Miners' Federations.	16	7870	Mr. F. P. Rhodes.
Return, made to the Board of Trade, of average hours of miners.	—	7850 7874	,,
Abstract of fluctuations in wages (1871–91) - -	—	7968	,,
Rules and 14th Annual Report of the West Riding of Yorkshire Miners' Permanent Relief Fund Friendly Society.	—	8078	Mr. A. M. Chambers.
Rules and First Annual Report of Thorncliffe and Rockingham Permanent Relief Society.	—	8078	,,
Report of the Council presented at the Twelfth Annual Conference of the Central Association for Dealing with Distress caused by Mining Accidents.	—	8267	Mr. G. L. Campbell.
Table showing (for years 1885–1890) the number of members of the Miners' Permanent Relief Fund who have, and the number who have not, entered into arrangements with their employers in view of the Employers' Liability Act, 1880.	—	8275 8286	,,
Return showing the per-centage of subscriptions, by workmen, to insurance companies in view of the Employers' Liability Act, and the per-centage of commission paid to colliery officials for deducting subscriptions to relief funds.	—	8307 8342	,,
Labour Representation Ballot Paper of the Derbyshire Miners' Association.	(See evidence.)	8728	Mr. J. Bennett.

APPENDIX I.

EARLIEST and LATEST of the DURHAM COAL TRADE SLIDING SCALES, being those adopted in 1877 and 1884.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT between the DURHAM COAL OWNERS' ASSOCIATION and the DURHAM MINERS' ASSOCIATION, for the ESTABLISHMENT of a SLIDING SCALE.

The following scale shall regulate the wages of hewers and labour below ground :—

SCALE.

Price.		Wage.
At and above.	But below.	
	5·4	7½ per cent. *reduction.*
5·4	5·8	5 „ do.
5·8	6·4	*Present Rate.*
6·4	7·0	5 per cent. *advance.*
7·0	7·8	10 „ do.
7·8	8·4	15 „ do.
8·4	9·0	20 „ do.
9·0	9·8	25 „ do.
9·8	10·4	30 „ do.
10·4	11·0	35 „ do.
11·0	11·8	40 „ do.
11·8	12·4	45 „ do.
12·4	13·0	50 „ do.
13·0	13·8	55 „ do.
13·8		60 „ do.
And so on.		

The following scale shall regulate the wages of above-ground workmen.

SCALE.

Price.		Wage.
At and above.	But below.	
	5·4	6 per cent. *reduction.*
5·4	5·8	4 „ do.
5·8	6·4	*Present Rate.*
6·4	7·0	4 per cent. *advance.*
7·0	7·8	8 „ do.
7·8	8·4	12 „ do.
8·4	9·0	16 „ do.
9·0	9·8	20 „ do.
9·8	10·4	24 „ do.
10·4	11·0	28 „ do.
11·0	11·8	32 „ do.
11·8	12·4	36 „ do.
12·4	13·0	40 „ do.
13·0	13·8	44 „ do.
13·8		48 „ do.
And so on.		

Able-bodied men, above ground, shall not be reduced below 2*s.* 9*d.* per day; but if they are now below 2*s.* 9*d.*, their wages are not to be changed.

This arrangement shall commence on the pays commencing on April 2nd and April 9th, according to the arrangement of pays at the several collieries, and shall continue for two years; and the changes to be made in wages, if any, shall be made on the pays, on or first, after the commencement of the months of April, August, and December of each year.

The price of coal, regulating the wages in the above scales, shall be the average net price realised for all coal raised at the pit's mouth during the four months preceding March, July, and November of each year.

The net price realised for all coal raised at the pit's mouth, shall be obtained by two properly accredited and certificated accountants, pledged to secrecy; one chosen by the owners, and the other by the workmen, and at their joint expense. The mode of arriving at such price, including the deductions involved therein, and the allowance for cost of coking shall be the same as was adopted by Messrs. MONKHOUSE, GODDARD, MILLER, and COMPANY, and Messrs. BENSON, ELAND, and COMPANY, in obtaining the net average selling price certified by them, in the arbitration proceedings before Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, and fully described in the printed instructions prepared by them for the guidance of their staff, and of the owners' clerks.

Coal consumed at owners' brick works shall be considered as vended.

Should any dispute arise as to the carrying out of any of these arrangements, the question in dispute shall be submitted to the decision of the chairman of the joint committee, who, if he cannot act himself, shall appoint some other umpire to act in his place. The award, in either case, to be final.

If, from any cause whatever, the returns of any member of the association be not included amongst those upon which the accountants' certificate is founded, that certificate shall not be invalidated; but if it is thought that the result has been materially influenced by such omission, the matter may be brought before the notice of the umpire, who shall amend or ratify such certificate as the facts may seem to warrant.

Messrs. MONKHOUSE, GODDARD, MILLER, and COMPANY, accountants, to act on behalf of the owners; and Messrs. BENSON, ELAND, and COMPANY, accountants, to act on behalf of the workmen; their charges for the same to be paid as may be arranged by the secretaries of the two associations.

Both parties shall remain at liberty to raise any question, not inconsistent with the maintenance of the sliding scale as above set forth.

On behalf of the Durham Coal Owners' Association,
THEO. WOOD BUNNING,
Secretary.

On behalf of the Durham Miners' Association,
WILLIAM CRAWFORD,
March 14th, 1877. Secretary.

AGREEMENT entered into June 12th, 1884, between the DURHAM COAL OWNERS' ASSOCIATION of the one part, and the DURHAM MINERS' ASSOCIATION, the DURHAM COLLIERY ENGINEMEN'S ASSOCIATION, the DURHAM COLLIERY MECHANICS' ASSOCIATION, and the DURHAM COKEMEN'S ASSOCIATION of the other part.

The wages of all the above classes shall from August 1st, 1884, until the agreement be determined, as herein-after provided, be regulated by the following sliding scale :—

When the Nett Average Selling Price of Coal		There shall be made the following Per-centage of Additions to, or Deductions from, the Standard Tonnage Rates and Datal Wages, being those prevailing at November 1879.	
Reaches	But does not Reach	Additions.	Deductions.
s. d.	*s. d.*		
3 10	4 0	none	none.
4 0	4 2	1¼	—
4 2	4 4	2½	—
4 4	4 6	3¾	—
4 6	4 8	5	—
4 8	4 10	6¼	—
4 10	5 0	7½	—
5 0	5 2	8¾	—
5 2	5 4	10	—
5 4	5 6	11¼	—
5 6	5 8	12½	—
5 8	5 10	13¾	—
5 10	6 0	16¼	—
6 0	6 2	18¾	—
6 2	6 4	20	—
6 4	6 6	21¼	—
6 6	6 8	22½	—

And so on upwards, 1¼ per cent. for each 2*d.*, the 2½ per cent. variations for the two ranges of 2*d.* each in price between 5*s.* 10*d.* and 6*s.* 2*d.* being limited to those special ranges.

3 8	3 10	—	1¼
3 6	3 8	—	2½

And so on downwards.

This scale shall affect surfacemen other than enginemen, mechanics, cokemen, and banksmen, as if 1 per cent. were substituted for 1½ per cent. all the way through, and as if 2 per cent. were substituted for 2½ per cent in the two special cases where a 2½ per cent. change is provided for.

Prices shall be ascertained in the manner and subject to all the provisions relating thereto, which applied to the sliding scale established October 11th, 1879,* with the following additional provisions, namely:—

1. That the quantity of all coals disposed of otherwise than for colliery purposes, be ascertained and priced at the average selling price of coal of a similar description, and the sum thus arrived at to be added to the sales.
2. That the quantities raised be checked by the quantities scld, consumed, and stocked.

The first ascertainment of price shall be for the three months, April, May, and June 1884, and shall be made during July, for the regulation of wages during August, September, and October, and so on every three months.

This agreement shall continue in force absolutely till July 31st, 1886, and unless terminated on that day by either party giving to the other two calendar months' previous notice, the agreement shall continue until such notice be given to terminate it on July 31st, in any succeeding year,

Nothing contained in this agreement shall preclude the right to raise the question of the wages of boys under 16, not being putters.

For the Owners.
- Lindsay Wood,
- David Dale,
- W. R. James Hopkins,
- T. Hugh Bell,
- R. Robinson,
- J. R. Crone,
- R. S. Johnson,
- W. H. Hedley,

For the Workmen.
- T. Hindmarch,
- W. H. Lambton,
- Joseph Routledge,
- Thos. Hart,
- John Bell,
- Robt. Hanson,
- Robert Allen,
- Launcelot Trotter,
- John Orr,
- John Forman,
- Daniel Reid,
- Patrick Carling,
- John Wilson,
- W. H. Patterson,
- W. Crawford,

APPENDIX II.

Rules and Byelaws of the Joint Committee of the Cleveland Mine Owners' and Miners' Associations.

RULES FOR THE JOINT COMMITTEE.

The object of the committee shall be to arbitrate, appoint arbitrators, or otherwise settle all questions (except such as may be termed district questions or questions affecting the general trade), relating to wages, practices of working, or any other subject which may arise from time to time at any particular mine, and which shall be referred to the consideration of the committee by the parties concerned. The committee shall have full power to settle all disputes, and their decision shall be final and binding upon all parties in such manner as the committee shall direct.

The committee shall consist of six representatives chosen by the North Yorkshire Cleveland Miners' Association, and six representatives chosen by the Cleveland Mine Owners' Association.

At meetings of the committee it shall be deemed that there shall be no quorum unless at least three members of each association be present.

Each meeting shall nominate its own chairman, who shall have no casting vote. In case of equality of votes upon any question, it shall be referred to two arbitrators, one to be chosen by the members of each association present at the meeting. These arbitrators to appoint an umpire in the usual way.

Each party to pay its own expenses; the expenses of the umpire to be borne equally by the two associations.

Should any alteration or addition to these rules be desired, notice of such change shall be given at the meeting previous to its discussion.

If any member of the committee is directly interested in a question under discussion, he shall abstain from voting, and a member of the opposite party shall also abstain from voting.

When any subject is to be considered by the committee, the secretary of the association by whom it is to be brought forward shall give notice thereof to the secretary of the other association at least seven clear days before the meeting at which it is to be considered.

BYELAWS FOR THE JOINT COMMITTEE.

The Joint Committee and their Duties.

1. It shall be the duty of the joint committee to settle all local disputes so far as reasonably practicable. The committee shall consist of the agent, general treasurer, and four financial members nominated from the respective lodges belonging to the Cleveland Miners' Association, and shall be chosen at the next general council meeting, by the delegates present, after such nominees have been sent to council for election. The committee to serve for 12 months, unless a majority of members determine to the contrary; one-half of the committee to retire every six months. The election of members for joint committee to take place at the last council meeting held in the months of June and December in each year, the retiring members to be eligible for re-election. The general secretary shall in all cases attend to take minutes of the meetings.

2. Should any member consider that he is being unjustly dealt with by his employers, or in any way not being properly remunerated for his labour, he must, in all matters of dispute, lay his case before the committee of his lodge. The committee must pay strict attention to all cases of dispute affecting members of their lodge; they shall carefully examine all particulars connected with the case. Should the committee decide that the case be sent to the general council or executive committee for their opinion upon the matter in dispute, they must first appoint a deputation to wait upon the manager of the mine where the dispute arose before sending such case to the council or executive committee. All such cases must be laid before the council or executive committee in writing, in order that they may be able to thoroughly examine the case. Should the council or executive committee be of opinion the case is a suitable one for joint committee, they must give such instructions to the general secretary as will empower him to see the case filed at its proper place and time.

* Being the same as those of the scale of March 14, 1877.

When the Net Average Selling Price of No. 3, Cleveland Pig-iron, ascertained in the manner herein-after defined reaches—	There shall be made the following Additions to, or Deductions from, the Tonnage Rates and Datal Wages prevailing prior to the Sliding Scale Agreement of November 5th, 1879.				
	Additions.				Deductions.
	Tonnage Rate.	Making the District Tonnage Rate for Hand Mining.	Wages of General Datal Men on Surface.	Wages of Enginemen and Mechanics and of Deputies and other Underground Datal Men.	
s. *d.*	*d.*	*d.*			
41 3·36	1·07	10·57	8·56 per cent.	10·70 per cent.	—
41 3·84	1·08	10·58	8·64 „	10·80 „	—
41 4·32	1·09	10·59	8·72 „	10·90 „	—
41 4·80	1·10	10·60	8·80 „	11·00 „	—
41 5·28	1·11	10·61	8·88 „	11·10 „	—
41 5·76	1·12	10·62	8·96 „	11·20 „	—
41 6·24	1·13	10·63	9·04 „	11·30 „	—
41 6·72	1·14	10·64	9·12 „	11·40 „	—
41 7·20	1·15	10·65	9·20 „	11·50 „	—
41 7·68	1·16	10·66	9·28 „	11·60 „	—
41 8·16	1·17	10·67	9·36 „	11·70 „	—
41 8·64	1·18	10·68	9·44 „	11·80 „	—
41 9·12	1·19	10·69	9·52 „	11·90 „	—
41 9·60	1·20	10·70	9·60 „	12·00 „	—
41 10·08	1·21	10·71	9·68 „	12·10 „	—
41 10·56	1·22	10·72	9·76 „	12·20 „	—
41 11·04	1·23	10·73	9·84 „	12·30 „	—
41 11·52	1·24	10·74	9·92 „	12·40 „	—
42 0·00	1·25	10·75	10·00 „	12·50 „	—
*	*	*	*	*	*
44 0·00	1·50	11·00	12·00 „	15·00 „	—
*	*	*	*	*	*
46 0·00	1·75	11·25	14·00 „	17·50 „	—
*	*	*	*	*	*
48 0·00	2·00	11·50	16·00 „	20·00 „	—
*	*	*	*	*	*
50 0·00	2·25	11·75	18·00 „	22·50 „	—
*	*	*	*	*	*
52 0·00	2·50	12·00	20·00 „	25·00 „	—
*	*	*	*	*	*
54 0·00	2·75	12·25	22·00 „	27·50 „	—
*	*	*	*	*	*
56 0·00	3·00	12·50	24·00 „	30·00 „	—
*	*	*	*	*	*
58 0·00	3·25	12·75	26·00 „	32·50 „	—
*	*	*	*	*	*
60 0·00	3·50	1*s.* 1·00	28·00 „	35·00 „	—

And so on above 60*s.* or below 34*s.* one hundredth part of a penny in the hand mining tonnage rate, and as to surface datal men eight hundredth parts (·08) of 1 per cent., and as to mechanics, enginemen, deputies, and other underground datal men one-tenth (·10) of 1 per cent., on the wages prevailing immediately prior to November 5th, 1879, for each variation of 0·96*d.* in the price of No. 3 Cleveland pig-iron; these provisions to be subject nevertheless to the following exception:—When the price of iron is from 40*s.* to 42*s.* the gradations in wages shall be the same for each variation of 0·48*d.* in price of iron as apply in the other portions of the scale to each variation in price of iron of 0·96*d.* per ton.

The wages for machine mining shall be affected in the proportion of three-fourths of the amount per ton by which the hand mining tonnage rate is affected.

The scale shall also apply to all hitherto variable yard or other prices in the same gradations as are applied to underground datal men.

No alteration shall during the currency of this agreement be made in the rates now prevailing at any of the mines of the owners parties hereto, unless such alteration is sought on the ground of the mining conditions or the mining appliances having changed so as to affect the facilities for working; but this provision is not to apply to questions already filed for the joint committee.

No reduction shall in future be made in the mining tonnage rate in whole or broken ground which will bring the price below the district rate, as provided in this sliding scale agreement, without a previous reference to the joint committee.

The first ascertainment of price shall be for the three months, July, August, and September 1887. Such ascertainment to take place as early as possible in October, and to regulate wages for October, November, and December 1887, and so on every three months; every change shall take effect on the first Monday after the 5th of October, January, April, or July as the case may be.

It shall not be competent for either party to determine this agreement before June 30th, 1889, nor then, unless three months' previous notice has been given.

The net average selling price of No. 3 Cleveland pig-iron shall be confidentially ascertained by two properly accredited and certificated accountants, one chosen by the mine owners and the other by the miners and at their respective charges, with whom there shall be associated any accountant who may be appointed by the North-Eastern Railway Company. Such price shall be ascertained from the books of the following firms:—Messrs. Bolckow, Vaughan, & Co., Limited, Messrs. Bell Brothers, Limited, Messrs. Gjers, Mills, & Co., Cargo Fleet Iron Co., Limited, Messrs. Wilsons, Pease, & Co., Messrs. B. Samuelson & Co., The Tees-Side Iron and Engine Works Company, Limited, and Edward Williams. The price shall be the actual net average invoice price at the works for each period of ascertainment.

Should any dispute arise as to the carrying out of any of these arrangements, the question in dispute shall be submitted to the decision of the joint committee of mine owners and miners, who, if they cannot agree, shall appoint an umpire to settle the question in difference.

If for any reason either party to this agreement desire to omit any of the firms above named, or to add thereto, the matter shall in case of difference be referred to the said committee.

David Dale.
Hugh Bell.
John G. Swan.
E. Windsor Richards.
A. L. Steavenson.
Geo. Taylor.
John Thomson.
William Charlton.
John Tate.
Joseph Toyn.
Robert Rowland.
James Reeder.
Robt. Turnbull.
William Stephens.
Jabez Strong.
William Spencer.

dismiss the matter as they could not deal with a fine which had not been imposed, nor could they deal with the notice as there was no jurisdiction in such matters, it being within the right of the manager to part with a man whom he considered careless, either with or without assigning a reason.

Subsequently the manager was appealed to, and he at first offered to re-instate the man if he submitted to a fine of 5*s*. It was, however, ultimately understood that the day lost should stand in lieu of the 5*s*. fine.

During the inquiry into this matter, it was pointed out that it would be physically impossible for the joint committee to examine into the reasons in all cases for giving in notices on either side.

JOHN DENNINGTON,
Secretary,
Cleveland Mine Owners' Association.

APPENDIX V.

MINUTES of the JOINT COMMITTEE of the DURHAM COAL OWNERS' AND DURHAM MINERS' ASSOCIATIONS, dated January 12th and November 9th, 1891 (taken as types).

JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING.

AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

January 12, 1891.—EDGAR J. MEYNELL, Chairman.

The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read, confirmed, and signed.

BINCHESTER.—Award received (I.).—Harvey Seam, (*a*) Broken, 2*d*. per ton less than Whole. (*b*) Yard prices. Whole, Cross-cuts (12 feet), 1*s*., (14 feet), 11*d*.; Winning Headways (12 feet), 11*d*., (14 feet), 9*d*.; Walls (12 feet), 9*d*., (14 feet), 7*d*.; Narrow Bords (12 feet), 7*d*., (14 feet), 5*d*. Broken (7 feet), Jenkins loose, 6*d*., fast, 8*d*.; Siding-over, loose, 6*d*., fast, 10*d*. (*c*) Making height. Where band is over 9 inches thick and is required to be taken up to make a clear height of 4 feet and width of 5 feet, 1½*d*. per inch per linear yard. Band shall be cast-back or filled into tubs if there be no room.

BLACK PRINCE.—Award received (II.).—Main coal drift. Ballarat Seam. (*a*) Whole, 10*s*. 3*d*. per score. (*b*) Making height of 42 inches and width of 5 feet, 1*s*. 11½*d*. per yard. (*c*) Yard prices shall be the same as now paid. (*d*) Face of coal at top of each pillar shall not exceed 2 yards over the canch. (*e*) All other prices and practices shall prevail as in the South Ballarat Seam.

CROXDALE.—Award received (III.).—Brockwell Seam. No. 2 Landing, Low Burn Hall district. Broken (in defined area), 11*d*. per ton. All other prices, customs, and practices of the seam shall apply to this district.

ETHERLEY.—GEORGE PIT.—Award received (IV.).—Hutton Seam. Rush district. (*a*) Whole, 1*s*. 7*d*. per ton. Broken, 1*s*. 5*d*. per ton. (*b*) Yard prices. Whole, Cross-cuts (6 feet), 1*s*. 6*d*., (12 feet), 1*s*. 3*d*.; Levels (6 feet), 1*s*. 6*d*., (12 feet), 1*s*. 3*d*.; Headways (9 feet), 1*s*. 6*d*., (12 feet), 1*s*. 3*d*.; Narrow Bords (6 feet), 1*s*. 6*d*., (12 feet), 1*s*.; Walls (9 feet), 1*s*. 4*d*., (12 feet), 1*s*. 2*d*.; Turning-away Bords (6 feet), 1*s*. 3*d*. Broken, Walls (9 feet), 1*s*. 2*d*., (12 feet), 1*s*.; fast Jenkins (9 feet), 10*d*., (12 feet), 8*d*.; loose Jenkins (9 feet), 9*d*., (12 feet), 7*d*. (*c*) Dilly-putting. 2*s*. per score. (*d*) Making height. Top, 1¼*d*. per inch per yard. Bottom, 1¾*d*. per inch per yard. Stowing stone, extra, ½*d*. per inch. (*e*) Pillars shall not exceed 10 yards thick. (*f*.) Laid out shall be the same as in the Busty Seam.

ETHERLEY.—JANE PIT.—Award received (V.).—Brockwell Seam. Top section. (*a*) Whole, where seam is 17 inches high, 2*s*. 5*d*. per ton, and for each inch the seam increases or decreases in height, 1*d*. per ton shall be deducted or added. (*b*) Height of places shall be taken in the centre of each place during the second week in each fortnight. Average height of flat shall be taken for places effected by hitches, &c. (*c*) Yard prices. Whole, Headways, (9 feet), 1*s*. 4*d*., (12 feet), 1*s*.; Narrow Bords (9 feet), 10*d*.; Walls (9 feet), 1*s*. 2*d*., (12 feet), 10*d*.; Cross-cuts (9 feet), 1*s*. 6*d*., (12 feet), 1*s*. 2*d*. (*d*) Making height of 38 or 42 inches, as required, the stone being pillared on the sides of the tramways, 1⅛*d*. per inch per yard. (*e*) Hand-putting, 1st rank, 1*s*. 3*d*. per score, and extra 1*d*. per score for every completed 20 yards.

ADELAIDE.—Agreement confirmed (1).—(*a*) Busty Seam. North Side, Third East, advanced 1¾*d*. per ton; Second East, advanced 2*d*. per ton; First East, advanced 2*d*. per ton; West Way, reduced 2*d*. per ton. East Side, Hitch Flat, advanced 3*d*. per ton; Stall Flats, reduced 2*d*. per ton. South Way, advanced 2*d*. per ton. (*b*) Harvey Seam. Second Dilly, advanced 2½*d*. per ton. East Deanery, advanced 2*d*. per ton. West Deanery reduced 1*d*. per ton. Page Way, reduced 1*d*. per ton.

BRANCEPETH.—A. PIT. Agreement confirmed (2).—Brockwell Seam. Dairy Landing, North First East Flat, advanced 15 per cent.; Donkey East Flat, reduced 5 per cent.; Littlewhite District, Badger Flat, advanced 10 per cent. (*b*) Jet Seam. East Landing South Flat, advanced 2½ per cent.

BROOMPARK.—Agreement confirmed (3).—Hutton Seam. Broken, 1½*d*. per ton less than Whole. Broken price shall be paid whenever the area of Goaf adjacent exceeds 500 square yards.

CORNSAY.—Agreement confirmed (4).—(*a*) Jubilee Five-Quarter Seam. North East Flat and South East Flat in defined area, Whole, 8*s*. 6*d*. per score. (*b*) High Five Quarter Drift. South East Flat, Whole, 12*s*. 6*d*.; Broken, 11*s*. 6*d*. per score. Bank-head Flat, black band, 2*d*. per inch per score. Good Seggar shall be carefully filled where required. (*c*) Other prices, practices, and customs shall remain unaltered.

RODDYMOOR.—Agreement confirmed (5).—Ballarat Seam. (*a*) Whole, 13*s*.; Broken, 11*s*. 3*d*. per score. (*b*) Making height, 1*s*. per yard. (*c*) All other prices and practices shall remain as at present.

PEASES' WEST.—WHITE LEA DRIFT.—Agreement confirmed (6).—Little Seam. (*a*) Broken, 12*s*. 6*d*. per score. (*b*) Other prices and practices shall remain unaltered. Agreement confirmed (7).—Little Seam. (*a*) Whole, 14*s*. 3*d*. per score. (*b*) Making height of 44 inches, 1*s*. 4*d*. per yard. (*c*) Yard prices. Whole, Winning Headways (6 feet), 1*s*. 2*d*., (9 feet), 1*s*.; Walls (6 feet and 9 feet), 1*s*.; Narrow Bords, 10*d*. Turning-away Bords, 4*s*. each. Broken, Siding-over, 8*d*.; fast Jenkins, 6*d*.; Juds, 5*d*. each. (*d*) All other prices and practices shall remain as at present.

STANLEY DRIFT.—Agreement confirmed (8).—(*a*) Yard Seam. Whole, advanced 10*d*. per score. (*b*) Five-Quarter Seam. North Way, West Flat, Broken, advanced 2*s*. per score. (*c*) Ballarat Seam. West Ballarat, Third North, broken advanced 1*s*. per score. Drift Jigger, whole reduced 1*s*. per score. North Ballarat, East Flat, Whole reduced 1*s*. per score, Broken reduced 6*d*. per score. (*d*) Other prices and practices shall remain as at present.

TURSDALE.—Agreement confirmed (9).—Busty Seam, Fourth West district. (*a*) Whole, 1*s*. 0½*d*. per ton. (*b*) Plate band, ½*d*. per ton. (*c*) All other prices and practices shall remain unaltered.

REPORTS.—It was agreed, in future, that referees, if unable to agree, shall present separate reports to the joint committee.

ADELAIDE.—Owners complain that men laid pit idle on October 29 last.—The action of the men in laying the pit idle the day following a fatal accident was condemned, and must not be repeated.

AUCKLAND PARK.—"Men ask to be paid 7*s*. 2*d*. per "score instead of 5*s*. 10*d*., or 1*s*. 4*d*. difference per score, "since the commencement of working the block of coal. "—Report ordered to ascertain whether the agreement

hand, 1*s.* 6½*d.* per ton ; Second Right-hand, 1*s.* 5½*d.* per ton. (*b*) All other flats shall remain as at present.

MURTON.—Agreement confirmed (219).—East Pit. Hutton Seam. Winch Flat, 7*s.* 2*d.* per score.

NEWBOTTLE. — Agreement confirmed (220). — (*a*) Dorothea Pit. Roburite shall be provided free of charge for use in Old Five-Quarter Seam cross-cuts. (*b*) Hitches, place 6 feet wide 2*d.* per inch ; and for each 3 feet greater width, 1*d.* per inch ; in case hitch is running cross-cut way, in addition to foregoing, until hitch leaves the place, ½*d.* per inch per yard measured parallel to sides of place ; in case hitch runs in direction of place, 1*d.* per inch per yard as long as it continues in place. (*c*) Margaret Pit. Two scores may be drawn between 4 p.m. and 6 a.m., except on holidays.

RAINTON. — MEADOWS PIT. — Agreement confirmed (221).—Five-Quarter Seam. (*a*) Gatewaymen shall clear the gateways and canches in both ordinary and cross-gateways of stones and rubbish, which are to be stowed ; each pack shall be well built and closely stowed. In the event of a pack not being well built and properly stowed, it shall be pulled down and rebuilt without remuneration. Timber shall be drawn clear for the pack walls, and in all cases the pack walls shall be built from a clean thill. Timber shall be taken out as the packing proceeds, and other timber set to keep the packers safe. All back timber shall be drawn along the face after packs are built, leaving sufficient timber standing for the protection of the coal face ; the drawn timber shall be placed in a safe place, convenient for further use and put all necessary timber in gateways. (*b*) Ordinary and cross-gateways shall be 9 feet wide between the pack walls, which are to be 6 feet deep with face walls every 6 feet. Canches shall be 6 feet wide at top and 5 feet at bottom of cut. (*c*) Ripping, in bottom 2*d.* per inch per yard. Packing, gateways 1*s.* per square yard ; square buts, with three walls, 1*s.* 1½*d.* per square yard, with four walls, 1*s.* 3*d.* per square yard. (*d*) Packs shall be kept within 4 feet of face ; and canches, in gateways, within 4 feet in rear of pack ends. (*e*) Proper slopes for tubs to travel shall be made at each canch at end of each shift. (*f*) Explosives shall be provided free. Agreement confirmed (222).—(*a*) Low Main Seam. South Cross-cut District, whole reduced ¼*d.* per ton ; longwall, 1*s.* 2*d.* per ton. North-west Cross-cut District, broken reduced 1*d.* per ton. (*b*) All other prices, practices, and customs shall remain as at present.

SEAHAM.—Agreement confirmed (223).—(*a*) No. 1 Pit. Hutton Seam. Second North-east Flat reduced 4 per cent. (*b*) No. 2 Pit. Hutton Seam. Second North, broken reduced 5 per cent. Second South, west side, whole reduced 6 per cent. (*c*) No. 3 Pit. Maudlin Seam. Second North-west, broken reduced 4 per cent. First North, Second West ; Second North, Skirting. Flat, and North-west Flat advanced 12 per cent.

THRISLINGTON.—Agreement confirmed (224).—Shifting gear. (*a*) Where men do not receive 24 hours' notice, 1*s.* (*b*) From one district to another, 1*s.* 6*d.* (*c*) In broken flats, time lost shall be reported with jud drawing.

USWORTH.—Agreement confirmed (225). (*a*) Maudlin Seam. Barrier Flat advanced 10 per cent. Cross-cut advanced 10 per cent. Low North Flat reduced 10 per cent. Follingsby reduced 5 per cent. Harton, thro-the-landing advanced 2½ per cent. (*b*) Low Main Seam. Fanny reduced 7½ per cent.

WHEATLEY HILL. — Agreement confirmed (226).—Coal shall be drawn at nights for six months without prejudice to the time being extended, if necessary.

BOLDON.—(1) Owners want arrangements made so as to be able to use the new 12 cwt. tub in the No. 1 Pit, or in parts thereof as they may from time to time require, instead of the present 12 cwt. tub.—That the arrangements be settled by arbitration, but the parties are recommended to agree. (2) Owners complain that men laid the pit idle on July 1, being the day after a fatal accident and contrary to the custom of the colliery.—The action of the men and boys was condemned, and such laying idle must not be repeated.

DEAF HILL.—Owners ask to have price fixed for hewers making height, by taking down the 4 to 5 inches stone and coal top of Harvey Seam as they did formerly.—Report received (97). Hewers did not take stone, &c. down formerly.

HEBBURN.—(1) Owners ask settlement of hewing prices to be paid in Fourth North-west Flat in A. Pit, and that the consideration paid under protest be repaid. (2) Owners complain that on the 27th and 29th June (cavilling days) the hewers came home before the proper time in A. and C. Pits. (3) Owners complain that the hewers are neglecting their work by delaying unnecessarily in going inbye and leaving their work before the proper time in A. and C. Pits. (4) Men ask that whole price be paid till there is 50 square yards of goaf on : back money sought. (5) Men ask an advance on hewing prices in Fourth West, Sixth East in A. Pit, Hutton Seam. (6) Men ask advances on hewing prices in Fourth South-west, Fifth North-west, North District, Fourth South-east, Fifth South-east, and Seventh South-west in C Pit, Hutton or Low Main Seam.—Settled (215, 216, and 217). (7) Owners want proper score prices and starting money fixed for hewers putting as follows : (*a*) hewers' shift, and (*b*) putters' shift. (8) Owners ask that the A. Pit and C. Pit be not cavilled through as at present, but that each be regarded as a separate pit.—Withdrawn for settlement at colliery.

HERRINGTON.—Men ask an increase in the house rent allowance.—Settled.

HOUGHTON.—Men ask an advance on seven horse-keepers' wages.—Settled.

HUTTON HENRY.—(1) Owners ask reduction of hewing prices in Third East Third Right-hand, Third East Second Right-hand, Third East Clennell's Right-hand, Second East Wales Middle Flat, Second East Straight-up, Second East Second Right-hand, Second East First Right-hand, Rodridge West Straight-in, Rodridge Cross-cut, Blakeley Hill Return, and Third South in Harvey Seam. (2) Owners ask reductions of hewing prices in Blakeley Hill First Flat and Blakeley Hill Second Flat in Busty Seam. (3) Men ask that manager pay bargain price for third place put up to let and taken as a bargain in Blakeley Hill Busty Seam last quarter's end : back money sought.—Settled (218). (4) Owners ask reduction of hewing prices paid in eight yard places in Second East District in Harvey Seam.—Adjourned to December 21 next. (5) Owners ask reduction of prices paid for ripping and packing in Harvey Seam. (6) Men ask an advance for J. Pounder, waiter-on, now paid 3*s.* 6*d.* per shift.—Withdrawn.

MARSDEN.—(1) Owners complain that owing to a fatal accident which happened on July 7, on the Marsden Railway, three miles from the colliery, the men and boys laid the pits idle on the following day, contrary to the custom of the colliery : owners ask that such laying idle be not repeated.—The action of the men and boys was condemned, and such laying idle must not be repeated. (2) Men ask an advance on horsekeeper's wages, now paid 16*s.* 6*d.* per week.—Irregular. (3) Men ask that putters above 20 years of age be paid extra score price for putting.—County question. (4) Men ask that Mr. Hudson be paid whole yard price, seeing he was paid whole score price.—Withdrawn.

MURTON.—(1) Men ask to be paid winning headways yard price for Welsh Way, Polka Pit.—Adjourned to enable men to produce their plan dated September 13, 1888. (2) Men ask that the deputies be paid the same wages now for back bye shifts as they were paid prior to the strike, in keeping with agreement of August 21, 1891 : back money sought.—Settled. (3) "Underground fire-"men at the double-flued boilers in the Low Main "Seam refuse to fire two boilers per man as hereto-"fore, owners ask that they be ordered to do so.—Report "ordered to ascertain the facts ; the parties have power "to settle." The referees reported (116) that they were unable to agree, and were empowered to appoint an umpire who shall decide between them in accordance with minute of September 26, 1891.

LITTLETOWN.—Men ask an advance on hewing prices in East Way in Low Main Seam.—No one attended to represent the workmen.

NEWBOTTLE.—MARGARET PIT.—(1) Owner asks to be allowed to draw coals at nights as heretofore until the West Side, Hutton Seam, is opened out. (2) Men ask to be allowed 7*d.* per shift for house rent to men who are living in rented houses, instead of 1*s.* 6*d.* per week, as at present.—Settled (220).

RAINTON.—ADVENTURE PIT.—Owner asks reduction of shifters' wages. (2) Owner asks that no helper-up shall be sent to assist hand-putters unless the gradient over a continuous distance of at least 30 yards shall exceed 1 in 30 for the full tub and 1 in 20 for the empty tub.—Withdrawn. (3) Owner wants prices fixed for ripping and packing in the Five-Quarter Seam.—Sent to arbitration, but the owners and men are recommended to agree.

RAINTON.—ALEXANDRINA PIT.—(1) Owner asks the joint committee to decide what hewing price shall be paid for whole workings in the Low Flat, Staple Way, High Main Seam. (2) Owner asks reduction of shifters' wages. The Owner asks that no helper-up shall be sent to

assist hand-putters unless the gradient over a continuous distance of at least 30 yards shall exceed 1 in 30 for the full tub and 1 in 20 for the empty tub.—Withdrawn.

RAINTON.—MEADOWS PIT.—(1) Owner asks for prices to be fixed for filling coal in Five-Quarter Seam.—Sent to arbitration, but the owners and men are recommended to agree. (2) Owner asks reduction of shifters' wages. (3) Owner asks that no helper-up shall be sent to assist hand-putters unless the gradient over a continuous distance of at least 30 yards shall exceed 1 in 36 for the full tub, and 1 in 30 for the empty tub.—Withdrawn. (4) Owner asks reductions of hewing prices in South Cross-cut Whole, and North Way Broken in Low Main Seam.—Settled (222). (5) Consideration of award (9) of September 9, 1891.—Adjourned.

RYHOPE.—Men ask an advance on hewing prices in Second Curve Landing End and Second Curve Shunt in West Pit, Maudlin Seam.—Withdrawn.

ST. HILDA.—" Men refuse to work certain places in " Second East Hutton Seam.—Report ordered, and " the parties to have power to settle." The referees reported (64) that they were unable to agree, and were empowered to appoint an umpire who shall have power to revise the hewing prices in certain places in Second East Flat, if necessary.

SEAHAM.—(1) Owner asks reductions of hewing prices in Second North Brokens and Second South-west Side Whole in Hutton Seam, No. 2 Pit. (2) Men ask an advance on hewing prices in First North Second West First East Way, Second North Whole First East Way, and North-west Flat First East Way in Maudlin Seam.—Settled (223).

SILKSWORTH.—(1) Men seek for wide wall price to be paid where driving in the solid in Fifth West North Flat, No. 2 Bank in Hutton Seam; back money sought.—Settled. (2) Men ask for Hutton Seam banksmen, and Maudlin and Hutton seams onsetters to work only county hours.—Granted. (3) Owner asks that the wages of the datal men and boys be adjusted in accordance with the 10 hours agreement, and back money sought.—Sent to arbitration, but the owners and men are recommended to agree.

SOUTH HETTON.—Men ask an advance on hewing prices in South-east Bank North Cross-cut Flat in Main Coal Seam; and an advance on North Pit onsetters' wages, also an advance on hewing prices in whole at the Fourth West, West Flat North-east Bank, whole at the Hall-field North Flat South East Bank, and whole at South Bords Flats West Drifts District in Main Coal Seam.—Report ordered as to owners' objections, if objections are not sustained, the parties to have power to settle.

THORNLEY.—Men ask an advance on G. Burnham's wages, timber drawer, now paid 5*s.* 1½*d.* per day.—Withdrawn.

THRISLINGTON.—(1) Owners ask for reductions of wages paid to persons employed at washing apparatus. (2) Men ask that washing dolly men be paid the last 5 per cent. (county per cent.).—Adjourned, as letter was not sufficient.

WINGATE GRANGE.—(1) Owners desire to have the hour for back shift men going down changed from 9.30 a.m. as at present to 9 a.m., the men commencing to ride at 4 p.m.—Moved off the Board. (2) Owners wish to cavil three sets of men into the 12 yard places in the Low Main Seam.—Withdrawn. (3) Men ask to be allowed a larger box for laid out on the new screens.—Report ordered to say whether under the altered screens there should be any alteration in the laid out, with power to settle. (4) Men ask that all datal putters be paid the 2*s.* 9*d.* and per-centage; back money sought.—To be paid 2*s.* 7½*d.* per day. (5) Men ask to be paid whole price for barrier coal, in accordance with colliery custom.—Sent to arbitration, but the owners and men are recommended to agree.

APPENDIX VI.

SUMMARY of CASES dealt with during the Year 1890 by the DURHAM COAL TRADE JOINT COMMITTEE.

Districts, &c.	No. of Meetings.	No. of Claims and Agreements.			Cases settled by Agreement.	Otherwise settled.	Withdrawn or passed over.	Decided by the Joint Committee.	Not considered; being Cases not within Jurisdiction.	Referred.		Number of	
		Men.	Owners.	Totals.						Arbitration.	Report.	Arbitrations.	Reports.
Miners:													
Auckland - - -	8	164	113	277	81	40	39	80	3	23	11	22	10
East - - - -	9	268	165	433	47	70	114	123	19	39	21	37	18
North - - -	8	120	71	191	58	23	38	50	3	13	6	13	6
Totals - -	25	552	349	901	186	133	191	253	25	75	38	72	34
Cokemen - - -	(7)	54	26	80	—	3	37	29	—	3	8	2	8
Enginemen - - -	(6)	15	1	16	—	—	4	12	—	—	—		—
Mechanics - - -	(6)	18	1	19	—	5	1	11	1	—	1	—	1
Totals - -	25	639	377	1,016	186	141	233	305	26	78	47	74	43

APPENDIX VII.

FLUCTUATIONS in WAGES in the DURHAM COAL TRADE, 1871–91.

Hours per shift 6 to 6½ at face. Houses free. Fire coal, 6*d.* per day leading. Sliding scale agreed to March 9, 1877. Second scale agreed to October 11, 1879. Third scale agreed to April 9, 1882. Fourth scale agreed to June 12, 1884, and terminated July 31, 1889.

Date.	Advanced.	Reduced.	Making the Wages to be				Wages per Day.	
			Above 1871.	Below 1871.	Above 1879.	Below 1879.	6 Hours.	6½ Hours.
	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	*s. d.*	*s. d.*
1871	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4 9
1872, February	20	—	20	—	—	—	—	5 8·40
„ July	15	—	38	—	—	—	6 6⅓	—
1873, February	15	—	58·7	—	—	—	7 6⅔	—
1874, April	—	10	42·8	—	—	—	6 9⅓	—
„ November	—	9	30	—	—	—	6 2⅔	—
1875, April	—	5	23·5	—	—	—	5 10⅓	—
1876, February	—	7	14·86	—	—	—	5 4⅔	—
„ September	—	6	7·97	—	—	—	5 0⅔	—
1877, April	—	7⅓	—	0·13	—	—	4 8⅓	5 0¼
1879, May	—	8¾	—	8·87	—	—	4 3·33	4 6·98
„ July	—	1¼	—	10·00	—	—	4 2	4 5
1880, December	2½	—	—	7·76	2½	—	4 3¼	4 6½
1882, April	3¾	—	—	4·39	6¼	—	4 5·12	4 8·31
„ August	—	1¼	—	5·51	5	—	4 4·50	4 7·65
„ November	1¼	—	—	4·39	6¼	—	4 5·12	4 8·31
1883, February	1¼	—	—	3·26	7½	—	4 5·75	4 8·97
„ July 20*	—	—	—	—	—	—	4 6⅓	4 9⅓
1884, August	—	1¼	—	4 39	6¼	—	4 5¾	4 8¾
1885, May	—	1¼	—	5·51	5	—	4 5	4 8
1886, May	—	1¼	—	6·64	3¾	—	4 4¼	4 7¼
1888, February	1¼	—	—	5·51	5	—	4 5	4 8
„ May	—	1¼	—	6·64	3¾	—	4 4¼	4 7¼
„ August	—	1¼	—	7·76	2½	—	4 3⅔	4 6¾
„ November	1¼	—	—	6·64	3¾	—	4 4¼	4 7¼
1889, February	1¼	—	—	6·51	5	—	4 5	4 8
„ August	10	—	3·49	—	15	—	4 11	5 2
„ December	10	—	12·49	—	25	—	5 5	5 8
1890, March	5	—	17	—	30	—	5 8	5 11
1891, January	5	—	21·5	—	35	—	5 11	6 2

* Agreed that each 1¼ per cent. shall vary hewers' average earnings ¾*d.* per shift.

APPENDIX VIII.

NUMBER, &c. of various CLASSES of WORKMEN employed by the DURHAM COAL OWNERS' ASSOCIATION.

District.	Hewers. (7 Hours per Day.)	Wastemen, Stonemen, and Shifters. (8 Hours per Day.)	Deputies. (7½ Hours per Day.)	Putters over 16. (10 Hours per Day.)	Putters under 16. (10 Hours per Day.)	Winding Enginemen. (8 Hours per Day.) Above.	Winding Enginemen. (8 Hours per Day.) Below.	Other Enginemen. (10 to 12 Hours.) Above.	Other Enginemen. (10 to 12 Hours.) Below.	Mechanics. (53 Hours per Week.) Above.	Mechanics. (53 Hours per Week.) Below.	Cokemen. (No definite Hours.)	Other Classes. Men and Boys above 16. (10 to 12 Hours.) Above.	Other Classes. Men and Boys above 16. (10 to 12 Hours.) Below.	Other Classes. Boys below 16. (10 to 12 Hours.) Above.	Other Classes. Boys below 16. (10 to 12 Hours.) Below.	Total. Above.	Total. Below.
North	7,684	2,500	702	1,572	47	169	13	107	63	857	5	810	2,323	1,926	456	1,447	4,727	15,934
East	13 103	5,432	1,192	2,457	35	213	9	221	181	1,814	29	—	4,531	3,745	910	2,606	7,980	28,789
Auckland	8,631	2,096	690	1,717	60	128	—	264	84	1,059	—	2,436	2,212	1,941	562	1,283	6,661	16,502
Total	29,418	10,028	2,584	5,746	142	510	22	592	328	3,830	34	3,537	9,066	7,612	1,928	5,336	19,368	61,245
																	Grand Total -	80,613

The hours per day of the persons employed underground are reckoned from the time of leaving the surface to returning to surface.

APPENDIX X.

SUMMARY of CASES dealt with during the five years, 1886–1890, by the NORTHUMBERLAND COAL TRADE JOINT COMMITTEE.

Year.	Number of Meetings.	No. of Cases.			References.	Adjourned.			Settled by Agreement and confirmed.	Decided by Committee.	County Question or no Jurisdiction.	Withdrawn.	Moved off the Board.	Settled.
		Owners.	Men.	Total.		For further Information.	To try and Settle.	Improper Notice.						
1886	6	16	37	53	5	1	3	4	1	11	1	9	12	6
1887	3	9	22	31	7	1	1	—	1	10	1	1	7	2
1888	6	22	36	58	7	4	2	—	2	19	2	6	13	3
1889	6	20	41	61	4	2	3	—	4	10	5	7	22	4
1890	6	13	44	57	5	7	3	—	5	14	1	6	13	3
	27	80	180	260	28	15	12	4	13	64	10	29	67	18

APPENDIX XI.

RULES of the NORTHUMBERLAND COAL TRADE JOINT COMMITTEE.

STEAM COLLIERIES DEFENCE ASSOCIATION.

JOINT COMMITTEE RULES, MARCH 1877.

(*Reprinted July* 1888.)

Object of the Joint Committee.

1. That the object of the joint committee shall be to discuss all questions (except such as may be termed county questions, or questions affecting the general trade) relating to matters of wages, practices of working, or any other subject which may arise from time to time at any particular colliery, and which shall be referred to the consideration of the committee by the parties concerned. The committee shall discuss all disputes and hear evidence, and their decision shall be final.

Composition of the Committee.

2. The committee shall consist of six representatives chosen by the Miners' Union, and six representatives chosen by the Steam Collieries Defence Association, and a chairman to be chosen annually by the two associations, which chairman shall have a voto.

Quorum.

3. At meetings of this committee it shall be deemed that there shall be no quorum unless the chairman and at least three members of each association be present.

Expenses.

4. Each party to pay its own expenses.

Additional rules.

5. Should any alteration of, or addition to, these rules be desired, notice of such change shall be given at the meetng previous to its discussion.

Voting.

6. If any member of the committee is directly interested in any question under discussion, he shall abstain from voting, and a member from the opposite party shall also abstain from voting.

Agenda.

7. That an agenda of the cases to be heard by the joint committee shall be sent out at least four clear days before each meeting, and it shall not be competent for any member to propose any other matter for discussion.

Order of cases.

8. When both owners and miners have cases on the agenda paper, one case from each side shall be considered alternately.

Umpire, appointment of.

9. That if any case is referred to arbitration, and the arbitrators fail to agree as to the appointment of an umpire, the chairman of the joint committee shall make the selection.

Prices throughout the pit.

10. All applications for advances or reductions in any portion of a pit shall open out the question of the prices paid to the same class of workmen throughout the whole of the pit.

Average wage.

11. That before any change in hewing prices be entertained, it must be clearly shown that the average wage on which the claim is made is at least 5 per cent. above or below the county average.

ADDITIONAL JOINT COMMITTEE RULES.

(*Extracted from the Minute Books.*)

Notice applies

12. July 13, 1878.—That in future both the owners and the men give not less than 10 clear days' notice of any application to the joint committee. The notice between the two associations to remain as at present.

Notice be sig stamp

May 12 and July 14, 1883.—It was decided that in future all notices should be given in writing, and either signed by an official or stamped.

Pays' agen to taken.

13. November 30, 1878.—That the rule be that the three pays before the application be taken, excluding the first and last yays of the quarter, but that no evidence as to any pays be excluded.

14. July 8, 1882.—Where two pits are cavilled through they are to be considered as one, and the average of the whole taken.

Rehea of case

15. January 18, 1879.—It was agreed that in future no case can be reheard until one meeting intervenes.

Chairm re-elect of.

16. April 26, 1879.—The chairman to be re-elected annually at the meeting held on the second Saturday in May, the question of his re-election having been previously discussed at the preceding bi-monthly meeting of the joint committee.

County average wage, standa

17. July 12, 1879.—The county average being taken at 4*s.* 9½*d.*, it was agreed that the increase of hours, where it leads to an increase of work, should be taken at 4½*d.* as the maximum, but each case to depend on its own merits. It is understood that no owner can claim any reduction unless the pit's average is at least 5 per cent. above 5*s.* 2*d.* In case of any colliery claiming an advance, the county average is to be taken at 4*s.* 9½*d.* plus any advantage which may have arisen from the increase of hours.

Advan and re tions, c memor of chan

18. November 13, 1880.—In future advances and reductions to commence of the first pay commencing after the decision.

19. July 9, 1881.—It was agreed that in future reports and awards should state the date at which any contemplated change should take place.

APPENDIX XII.

MINUTES of the NORTHUMBERLAND COAL TRADE JOINT COMMITTEE, dated September 19th, 1891 (taken as a type).

JOINT COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

September 19, 1891.—J. R. D. LYNN, Chairman.

The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read, confirmed, and signed, after the following had been amended as under :—

SEATON BURN.—There being an error in award of April 11, owners ask that the expression in the ramble scale, "First 3 inches ¾*d.* per ton, &c.," be altered to "at 3 inches, ¾*d.* per ton, &c."—That the ramble scale be as follows : at 3 inches and up to 6 inches ¾*d.* per ton, at 6 inches and up to 9 inches 1½*d.* per ton, at 9 inches and up to 12 inches 1¾*d.* per ton, at 12 inches and up to 15 inches 2*d.* per ton, and so on.

DUDLEY.—Award received.—Low Main Seam. Where the top coal is left up, hewers shall be paid ¾*d.* per ton for the band when ½ inch and upwards in thickness.

WALKER.—Award received.—(*a.*) Beaumont Seam. Delight Flats (three), advanced 3*d.* per ton. Charlotte Flats, advanced 1*d.* per ton. Straight North Way, Top-of-trouble Flat (bords and walls), advanced 4*d.* per ton; West Flats, reduced 3*d.* per ton. (*b.*) Brockwell Seam, Church Way, advanced 2*d.* per ton. (*c.*) Leading bordways gateway in each longwall district, extra 1½*d.* per ton. (*d.*) Beaumont and Brockwell Seams shall be considered as short hour pits, and hours of hewers shall be : Fore shift shall descend at 3.30 a.m. ; back shift shall descend at 9.30 a.m. ; loose the fore shift in face, and ascend at 4 p.m. (*e.*) Hand-putters, first rank, 2*s.* per score, and the present system of helping up shall be abolished.

THROCKLEY.—Agreement confirmed.—(*a.*) Stone Coal Seam. Whole 1*s.* 8*d.* per ton ; longwall 1*s.* 5½*d.* per ton. (*b.*) New Main Coal Seam. East District, under the band, 1*s.* 8*d.* per ton ; where band is taken down, 1*s.* 6*d.* per ton, and the usual payment for band.

BURRADON.—Men request the masters to pay the same tonnage on Little Bank, Longwall Flat, East Yard Seam, which was paid when it was stopped.—Settled.

CAMBOIS.—Hewers request to be freed from drawing. —County question.

CRAMLINGTON.—AMELIA PIT.—Owners desire to abolish the present Yankee Jack system, and in future to pay on gross, and request the joint committee to fix the corresponding tonnage rate.—The parties are recommended to agree, and should they fail, the case shall be settled by arbitration.

NEW HARTLEY.—Men request to be paid 1*s.* 2*d.* per yard for winning bords 4 yards wide, 2*s.* per yard for stentons 4 yards wide, and 10*d.* per yard for winning bords 6 yards wide ; also to be paid back arrears.—That winning bords 12 feet wide shall be paid 1*s.* per yard, and 18 feet wide *nil;* and headways stentons, 12 feet wide, shall be paid 1*s.* 8*d.* per yard.

RADCLIFFE.—Workmen claim that smart money be paid for accidents in the case of R. Moffit and others.—Granted, subject to the production of certificates signed by a properly qualified medical practitioner.

SEGHILL.—(1.) Men request that Wm. Felton and partners be paid, while putting through a trouble, according to the county rule, the average earnings of their two previous pays.—Recommend the parties to try to settle, and if not the case may be brought forward again. (2.) Men request that the black band be measured in the Blake Seam.—Sent to arbitration.

WALKER.—(1.) Owners ask re-adjustment of Low Main Seam hewers' hours and shifts as follows :—Day shift or tub-loaders (old men), descend at 9.30 a.m., and ride at 4.30 p.m. ; night shift, fore shift descend at 4.30 p.m. and ride at 11 p.m., and back shift descend at 10 p.m. and ride at 5 a.m. ; lads, &c. descend at 9.30 a.m. and ride at 7.30 p.m. ; and descend at 6.30 p.m. and ride at 4.30 a.m.—That day shift or tub-loaders shall descend at 9.30 a.m. and ride at 4 p.m. ; night shift, fore shift shall descend at 4 p.m., back shift shall descend at 10 p.m., loose fore shift in face and ride at 4.30 p.m. Lads, fore shift shall descend at 6.30 a.m. and ride at 4.30 p.m. ; back shift shall descend at 6.30 p.m. and ride at 4.30 a.m. (2.) Owners ask that the night shift hewers in the Beaumont and Brockwell Seams be increased from two to eight if required.—Granted, the manager agreeing that separate places be found for these night shift hewers so as not to interfere with day shift hewers' places.

WEST SLEEKBURN.—Men request extra pay for being obliged to drive places 15 yards wide in longwall instead of the 10 yards usually driven.—Moved off the board, as the mode of working has not been altered.

APPENDIX XIII.

SLIDING SCALE AGREEMENT entered into January 1st, 1892, between the COLLIERY OWNERS and the WORKMEN of the MONMOUTHSHIRE and SOUTH WALES DISTRICT.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT made this first day of January, 1892, between the undersigned W. THOMAS LEWIS, EDWARD JONES, EDWARD P. MARTIN, EDWARD DAVIES, FRED. L. DAVIS, WILLIAM THOMAS, T. FORSTER BROWN, A. G. OGILVIE, and JAMES COLQUHOUN, and the other persons who shall execute this agreement, duly authorised to act on behalf of the members of the Monmouthshire and South Wales Coal Owners' Association, herein-after called the employers, not exceeding eleven persons in all, of the one part, and the undersigned WILLIAM ABRAHAM, DAVID MORGAN, ISAAC EVANS, MORGAN WEEKS, THOMAS ISAAC, DANIEL JONES, THOMAS DAVIES, THOMAS RICHARDS, ALFRED ONIONS, DAVID BEYNON, and JOHN B. JONES, duly authorised to act on behalf of the workmen (excepting enginemen, stokers, and outside fitters) employed at the collieries of the members of the said association of the other part.

1. The said parties hereto are herein-after styled the joint committee, and the said committee shall be kept on foot by the employers and workmen.

2. The joint committee shall have two secretaries; one appointed by the employers, and the other by the workmen.

3. The number of members on the joint committee shall not exceed 22 representatives, exclusive of the two secretaries, 11 acting on behalf of the employers, and 11 acting on behalf of the workmen.

4. The joint committee agree upon the following conditions to regulate the rates of wages to be paid to the said workmen at the said collieries as and from the 1st day of January 1892.

5. This agreement shall comprise and apply to the whole of the members of the said association excepting as provided under clause 15.

6. The wages shall be regulated by a sliding scale based upon the average nett selling price of coal as ascertained, and from time to time certified by the accountants.

7. The average nett selling price shall be taken as for large colliery screened coal delivered free on board at Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, and Barry.

8. For coal sold into waggons or otherwise at the collieries, the cost of transit to the ordinary port of shipment shall be added in calculating the average nett selling price, workmen's coal to be excluded.

9. The standard of wages upon which future advances and reductions are to be made shall be the several rates actually paid at the respective collieries for the month of December 1879, and such wages shall be equivalent to a standard average nett selling price of 7*s.* 10½*d.* and under 8*s.* per ton. Provided that at the collieries where the standard or basis upon which wages are now regulated is the rate of wages paid in the year 1877, that shall continue to be the standard for those collieries.

9*a*. It is hereby agreed with respect to all collieries or portions of collieries now belonging to or herein-after

acquired or opened by the members of the Monmouthshire and South Wales Coal Owners' Association that both the employers and the workmen shall be bound to observe and fulfil all customs, provisions, and conditions existing in December 1879, at the associated collieries, and no variation shall be made therein either by employers or workmen, except by mutual agreement between the employers and their workmen or between their respective representatives.

10. The wages shall be advanced or reduced at the end of each period of two months by additions or reductions of 1¼ per cent. upon the mean monetary result found by the joint auditors as between the scale dated 6th of June 1882 and the scale dated 15th January 1890.

11. There shall be no maximum or minimum in the scale of wages under this agreement.

12. Two accountants shall be appointed, one by the employers and the other by the workmen, to ascertain the average nett selling price of coal, such average nett price for the—

Two months ending the last day of February shall govern wages from the first day of April to the last day of May, and so on for every successive two months.

13. The accountants shall give a certificate of the nett average selling price for each of the above periods of two months, such certificate to be forwarded to the joint secretaries, and afterwards upon the authority of the joint committee, to be made known to the employers and workmen.

14. Any contract for the sale of coal for a period of more than 12 months shall not be taken into account for more than six successive audits of two months each.

15. The accountants shall not take into account in the audits any coal produced from the anthracite collieries.

16. The joint committee shall meet at least once in each month.

17. Both parties to this agreement pledge their respective constituents to make every effort possible to avoid claims or disputes at the collieries, and that in case of any unavoidable differences, the owners and their officers, together with their workmen, shall endeavour to settle all matters at the collieries, and only in case of failing to effect a settlement shall an appeal be made to the joint committee. It is also hereby agreed that in such cases no notice to terminate contracts shall be given by either employers or their workmen before the particular question in dispute shall have been considered by the joint committee, and they shall have failed to arrive at an agreement.

18. That at the collieries under this agreement all wages due to the workmen shall be paid once in each fortnight, provided that at those collieries where wages are now paid weekly such practice shall continue in force.

19. The wages payable for the month of January 1892 shall be 46¼ per cent. above the standard of December 1879. An audit for the period 1st October to 31st December 1891 shall be taken to govern wages under this agreement for the two months commencing 1st February 1892.

20. The mineral to be gotten is clean, large screened coal only as herein-after described:—

The cutting price to be paid colliers includes all services in respect of the small coal necessarily produced in getting the large coal, in conveying it from the working places to the screen at the surface, and in the process of screening, that price being equal to the value of all the services involved in getting such large and small coal in compliance with the provisions of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887, and being more than the value of the services rendered in respect of the large screened coal only.

The weight of the large screened coal for the purpose of paying the colliers shall be ascertained as follows:—

After each tram is brought to the surface it shall be weighed at the weighing machine and then tipped over the screen in use at the colliery to separate the large coal passing over it from the small coal passing through it, the tare being deducted from its gross weight.

The small coal which has passed through the screen shall be weighed, and that weight shall be deducted from the gross weight of the coal in the tram to ascertain the nett weight of the large screened coal, and upon the nett weight of such large screened coal the wages shall be paid, which shall cover all the services rendered by the colliers in respect of the large coal and the small coal as weighed together at the machine.

20a. It is distinctly understood that clause 20 in this agreement is not intended to change the system of weighing, screening, and paying for the coal as heretofore, except by mutual agreement.

21. This agreement shall continue in force for six months from the 1st January 1892, and thenceforth until either party gives six months' notice of termination, such notice to be given on the first day of July 1892, or on the first day of any succeeding January or July.

22. A copy of this agreement is to be placed in a contract book at each colliery of the members of the Monmouthshire and South Wales Coal Owners' Association which shall be signed by or on behalf of the owners of such colliery, and also by each workman employed at such colliery as one of the terms of the engagement between the employers and the said workmen.

23. It is hereby agreed that all notices to terminate contracts on the part of the employers as well as employed shall be given only on the first day of any calendar month, and to terminate upon the last day of the same month.

W. Thomas Lewis.	William Abraham.
Edward Jones.	D. Morgan.
Edw. P. Martin.	Isaac Evans.
Edward Davies.	Morgan Weeks.
Fred. L. Davis.	T. D. Isaac.
W. Thomas.	Daniel Jones.
T. Forster Brown.	Thomas Davies.
Graeme Ogilvie.	Thomas Richards.
James Colquhoun.	Alfred Onions.
	David Beynon.
	John B. Jones.

Witness to the signatures of the parties hereto—
W. Gascoyne Dalziel.
Lewis Miles.
Dated this 1st day of January 1892.

Scale under clause 10 of the Agreement of 1st January 1892, as approved and adopted by the Sliding Scale Joint Committee, 6th February 1892.

When the Average Nett Selling Price of Coal per Ton, F.O.B. is		and under		Wages to be at the following Per-centage above the Standard.	Where the Average Nett Selling Price of Coal per Ton, F.O.B. is		and under		Wages to be at the following Per-centage above the Standard.
s.	d.	s.	d.		s.	d.	s.	d.	
7	10·25	8	0·00	Standard.	10	10·29	11	0·00	26¼
8	0·00	8	1·71	1¼	11	0·00	11	1·71	27½
8	1·71	8	3·43	2½	11	1·71	11	3·43	28¾
8	3·43	8	5·14	3¾	11	3·43	11	5·14	30
8	5·14	8	6·86	5	11	5·14	11	6·86	31¼
8	6·86	8	8·57	6¼	11	6·86	11	8·57	32½
8	8·57	8	10·29	7½	11	8·57	11	10·29	33¾
8	10·29	9	0·00	8¾	11	10·29	12	0·00	35
9	0·00	9	1·71	10	12	0·00	12	1·71	36¼
9	1·71	9	3·43	11¼	12	1·71	12	3·43	37½
9	3·43	9	5·14	12½	12	3·43	12	5·14	38¾
9	5·14	9	6·86	13¾	12	5·14	12	6·86	40
9	6·86	9	8·57	15	12	6·86	12	8·57	41¼
9	8·57	9	10·29	16¼	12	8·57	12	10·29	42½
9	10·29	10	0·00	17½	12	10·29	13	0·00	43¾
10	0·00	10	1·71	18¾	13	0·00	13	1·71	45
10	1·71	10	3·43	20	13	1·71	13	3·43	46¼
10	3·43	10	5·14	21¼	13	3·43	13	5·14	47½
10	5·14	10	6·86	22½	13	5·14	13	6·86	48¾
10	6·86	10	8·57	23¾	13	6·86	13	8·57	50
10	8·57	10	10·29	25	13	8·57	13	10·29	51¼
					13	10·29	14	0·00	52½

APPENDIX XIV.

Sliding Scale Agreement entered into June 22nd, 1882, between the Colliery Owners and the Workmen of the Cannock Chase District.

The wages of all workmen shall in future be regulated by the following scale, based upon the actual average price per sale ton of all the different kinds of coal and slack sold at the whole of the associated collieries of the above district.

The average price to be jointly ascertained by two qualified accountants, one of such accountants to be appointed and paid by the employers and the other by the employees.

The rate of 2*s.* 4½*d.* per stint shall be the minimum rate of wages payable.

The average price per ton for the 12 preceding weeks shall be ascertained and certified, and the rate of wages to be advanced or reduced according to the following scale, commencing from the take-up nearest to the 28th of June:—

When the average selling price reaches 6*s.* 1*d.*, then the stint shall be 2*s.* 4½*d.*
When the average selling price reaches 6*s.* 5*d.*, then the stint shall be 2*s.* 5¾*d.*
When the average selling price reaches 6*s.* 9*d.*, then the stint shall be 2*s.* 7*d.*
When the average selling price reaches 7*s.* 1*d.*, then the stint shall be 2*s.* 8¼*d.*
When the average selling price reaches 7*s.* 5*d.*, then the stint shall be 2*s.* 9½*d.*
When the average selling price reaches 7*s.* 9*d.*, then the stint shall be 2*s.* 10¾*d.*

The advance or reduction of wages under this agreement shall take place on and from the first take-up after the issue of the accountants' reports.

Allowance coal as under the old agreement.

This agreement to be binding for 12 months certain, and then subject to six months' notice from either side.

We, the undersigned, being the representatives of the colliery owners and the workmen, and forming the Conciliation Board for the Cannock Chase district, hereby accept and agree to be bound by the foregoing. Signed at Birmingham this 22nd day of June 1882.

On behalf of the Colliery Owners.	On behalf of the Workmen.
H. G. Bolam, per G.C.R.	Joseph Southall.
W. B. Harrison.	Henry Craddock.
John N. Brown.	Joseph Harvey.
John Williamson.	Joseph Austin.
Thos. McGhie.	Joseph Baker.
E. C. Peake, Sec.	Frederick Bailey.

APPENDIX XV.

The National Association of Colliery Managers.

Return relating to the Loss of Time by Coal Hewers during the Year 1891, furnished by Collieries in the various Inspection Districts of the United Kingdom.

1. Name of District.	2. Number of Collieries returning.	3. Total Shifts which could have been worked had the Coal Hewers presented themselves on Days when Collieries did work.	4. Total Number of Shifts worked by Coal Hewers during the Year.	5. Additional Shifts which could have been worked had the Coal Hewers presented themselves on Days when the Collieries could have worked.	6. Per-centage of Time worked by Coal Hewers during Period when Collieries did work. (Divide Column 4 by Column 3.)	7. Per-centage of Time lost by Coal Hewers during Period Collieries worked.	8. Total Shifts which could have been worked by Coal Hewers had they presented themselves on Days when Pits actually worked, and also on additional Days when Pits could have worked. (Columns 3 and 5.)	9. Per-centage of Time worked by Coal Hewers at Collieries which were open for Work. (Divide Column 4 by Column 8.)	10. Per-centage of Time lost by Coal Hewers during Period Collieries were open for Work.
					Per cent.	Per cent.		Per cent.	Per cent.
1. Scotland, East -	30	762,351	666,070	42,246	87	13	804,597	82	18
2. Scotland, West -	26	805,696	713,361	71,742	88	12	877,438	81	19
3. Newcastle - -	58	2,903,932	2,502,989	140,809	86	14	3,044,741	82	18
4. Durham - -	43	2,110,414	1,577,635	111,700	74	26	2,222,114	70	30
5. Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.	30	1,599,219	1,214,347	116,086	75	25	1,715,305	70	30
6. Manchester - -	12	433,198	383,855	41,674	88	12	474,872	80	20
7. Liverpool - -	10	370,135	298,507	11,934	80	20	382,069	78	22
8. Midland - -	29	1,566,894	1,385,267	35,284	88	12	1,602,178	86	14
9. North Wales (Metalliferous).	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10. North Staffordshire -	5	472,706	364,139	687	77	23	473,393	76	24
11. South Staffordshire -	5	135,594	119,438	4,236	88	12	139,830	85	15
12. South-Western -	6	231,387	212,393	2,871	92	8	234,258	90	10
13. South Wales - -	26	1,135,096	872,891	62,561	77	23	1,197,657	72	28
	280	12,526,622	10,310,892	641,830	82	18	13,168,452	78	22

APPENDIX XVI.

MINUTES of JOINT CONFERENCES between REPRESENTATIVE COAL OWNERS and the MINERS' FEDERATIONS on the EIGHT HOURS' QUESTION, held January 21st and February 11th, 1891.

CONFERENCE HELD JANUARY 21ST, 1891.

The coal-owners present were:—

Mr. ALFRED BARNES, M.P. (in the Chair).

Mr. BENJAMIN HINGLEY, M.P.
Sir W. MATHER JACKSON.
,, ALFRED HICKMAN.
Colonel WILSON.
,, SEELY.
,, WORSLEY WORSWICK.
Captain HARRISON.
Mr. A. C. BRIGGS.
,, JOHN WARRINGTON.
,, JAMES LAKEMAN.
,, W. E. GARFORTH.
,, MARSHALL NICHOLSON.
,, C. B. CRAWSHAW.
,, C. STEWART.
,, JOSEPH HAIGH.
,, E. T. INGHAM.
,, BEN DAY.
,, DAVID DAVY.
,, A. M. CHAMBERS.
,, R. EDISON.
,, C. D. ELLIS.
,, F. J. JONES.
,, JON. LONGBOTHAM.
,, A. HEWLETT.
,, T. D. GRIMKE.
,, ROBERT HANDSLEY.
,, G. C. GREENWELL, Jun.
,, JOHN SMITH.
Mr. W. S. BARRETT.
,, W. J. GREENER.
,, E. S. CLARKE.
,, JOHN P. JACKSON.
,, J. C. COLVER.
,, F. N. ELLIS.
,, J. A. LONGDEN.
,, R. SMALLMAN.
,, T. HANCOCK.
,, JOHN HALL.
,, W. SPENCER.
,, H. TRAFFORD NADIN.
,, GEORGE BOND.
,, JOHN WILLIAMSON.
,, — GREENER.
,, G. C. ROBINSON.
,, J. P. GARDNER.
,, R. HEATH, Jun.
,, J. B. COCHRANE.
,, C. TYLDEN WRIGHT.
,, E. BAINBRIDGE.
,, H. LEWIS.
,, W. BAGNOLD SMITH.
,, E. HAGUE.
,, W. DAWSON.
,, S. ALSOP.
,, JOHN BATEY.
,, FITZHERBERT WRIGHT.
,, F. C. CORFIELD.
,, GEORGE LEWIS.
,, THOS. CARRINGTON.

Mr. MASKELL PEACE, ,, F. PARKER RHODES, } Joint Secretaries.

The miners' representatives were:—

Mr. B. PICKARD, M.P., President.
,, SAMUEL WOODS, Vice-President.
,, ENOCH EDWARDS, Treasurer.
,, THOS. ASHTON, Secretary.

Miners' Representatives.	Districts.
Messrs. ED. COWEY, WM. PARROTT, JAMES MURRAY, JOHN WADSWORTH.	Yorkshire.
Messrs. THOS. GREENALL, JOS. GRIME, THOS. BOYLE, JAS. FINNEY, JAS. BATTLE, ED. HICKMAN, SAML. TAIT, WM. LANGFORD, JAMES CLARKE, JOHN ROBERTS, JOHN STORTON, RICHD. WATT, THOS. GLOVER, THOS. ASPINWALL, and ROBERT ISHERWOOD.	Lancashire.
Messrs. JNO. TURNER, THOS. YOUNG, WM. WESLEY, BENJ. DEAN, SAML. WHITEHOUSE, ALBERT STANLEY, G. H. ROWLINSON, HY. WOODLAND, WILLIAM WHITEFIELD, WILLIAM JOHNSON, JOHN PEACEFULL, BENJ. WINWOOD.	Midland Federation.
Messrs. JAS. HASLAM, W. E. HARVEY, W. HALLAM, BARNETT KENYON, and WM. BUCKLEY.	Derbyshire.
Messrs. W. BAILEY, A. STEWART, and W. HARDY.	Nottingham.
Messrs. THOS. CHAMBERS and WM. PARTNER.	Leicestershire.
Mr. A. SHARPE - - -	Cumberland.
Mr. WM. BRACE - - -	Monmouth.
Messrs. RD. JONES, D. GRIFFITHS, and W. ANDREWS.	North Wales.
Messrs. W. ABRAHAM, M.P., W. DAVIES, W. EVANS, RD. EVANS, BENJ. ASHTON, D. MORGAN, THOMAS THOMAS, JNO. THOMAS, THOS. RICHARDS, ALF. ONIONS, WM. COTTLE, JAS. WALTERS, WILLIAM JAMES, ISAAC EVANS, JAS. CLEMENTS, LOUIS MILES, MORGAN WEEKS, and JAS. COLEMAN.	South Wales and Monmouth Miners' Federation.
Mr. HY. BARNES - - -	West Bromwich.
Mr. J. KEIR HARDIE - -	Scotland.

Mr. PICKARD: Well, gentlemen, in order to get to business, I move that Mr. Barnes preside over this meeting.

Mr. HINGLEY: I second it.

Mr. PEACE put the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

Mr. BARNES took the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, in taking the chair on this occasion, I have only one remark to make on the part of the coal-owners. It has given them very great pleasure to accede to the request that was made to them on the part of the Federation of Miners to meet them on this occasion to discuss this very important question. Having said so, I consider my position as coal-owner must sink, and that in occupying this chair I must do it impartially, as I represent both sides on this occasion (hear, hear), and therefore I shall not make any observation with regard to questions that are brought forward. It will be simply my duty to conduct the meeting with decorum and I hope satisfaction at the end. (Hear, hear.)

It is a very important matter we are engaged upon, and I trust that in the deliberation and discussion whatever takes place shall be done in moderation; and when you consider the large interests that are concerned in this room, and also those outside of this room, which are greater, I trust also that this question will be solved in a way without causing irritation or getting into further proceedings. (Hear, hear.) With those remarks I do not know that I need say anything more, and I trust that when I resign the position as chairman, to which you have appointed me now, I shall do so with satisfaction, and that the question may be solved.

I will now call upon Mr. Peace to read the letters that have passed with regard to this question.

Mr. MASKELL PEACE read letters dated 24th November 1890, from Mr. Pickard and Mr. Thomas Ashton, and 29th December 1890, from Mr. Parker Rhodes and himself.

The CHAIRMAN: I believe that the coal-owners of the Federation are now prepared to hear from the Federation of Miners what they have called this meeting for, and to state their objects. Upon that I will call upon the president, Mr. Pickard, to be good enough to commence the proceedings.

Mr PICKARD: I do not think there is any need to delay the business, Mr. Chairman. We all know the great importance attached to this meeting and the interest taken, especially in the lobby here, and, in order that we might not get into any outside or irrelevant controversy, we have thought it right to just put into print what we have got to say; therefore my duty is a very simple one—to read out to you what we have to say on this matter.

The reason why we are met together, I think, is well known to everybody. The outside public seem to

think that if the coal owners and the workmen meet together they will be able to settle all their differences without any trouble whatever. Well, we can smile in our own way at what the outside public have generally got to say on these matters. I hope we shall be able to agree (hear, hear) among ourselves in the way that we have indicated. If we do not, I have no doubt we shall fight on in that spirit which will mean that we do not mean injury to each other, and that we will try to keep off personalities in all the matters we have to deal with. (Hear, hear.) Well, what we are asking you is also well known—that we want an eight hours' day from bank to bank—eight hours in every consecutive 24 hours.

Gentlemen, we appear before you to-day to prefer a claim, which, in our opinion, is a fair, a legitimate, and a just one, namely, to ask you to agree to a working day or shift of eight hours from bank to bank in every consecutive 24 hours' day. As is well known, we are anxious to secure such a working day by legislative enactment rather than by arrangements with gentlemen engaged in the trade. That is our first way of looking at it. Our reasons are that in our opinion an eight hours' day, if so arranged, would be conducive to health, safety, and the better regulation of the internal working of our mines. The long hours our men have to put in from the time they leave their homes to engage upon their work in any shift is, on the average, longer than in any other trade or occupation in the country. The average is from five in the morning until two or three in the afternoon, which means ten hours and a half to eleven hours actually engaged, either in getting to their work or being engaged at the coal face. This means more time put in than the staple trades of this country. Whilst these men on the surface are breathing pure air, being supplied with warm food and drinks, with their half hour to breakfast and their hour to dinner with such intervals in their toil, our miners are hurrying, as if for life or death, from home to the pit bank, and when they descend the mines the only pure air they possess during that day is what they take down with them. From the time they enter the mine they are breathing impure air, risking their lives every moment they are underground, and their toil is more dangerous and exhaustive than any other work known on the surface. It has been ascertained that the deaths among our miners, who actually work in the mines, are on the average higher than in the case of those working in other trades; that we have more disabled, permanently disabled men than any other trade, and there is not the slightest doubt that we have more killed, seriously injured, and non-seriously injured than half the trades of the country put together. It has just been ascertained that a great portion of the accidents resulting in persons killed and injured occurred during the later hours of the shift worked. From the fourth hour, and during the remaining portion of the shift—according to a return granted to Mr. Fenwick on coal mine explosions—vast numbers of our miners have been killed during the last 10 years; conclusively proving, as we contend, that as men become mentally and physically exhausted they are not so well able to look after their own and their fellow workmen's safety. We also ask you to concede the eight hours' day because the workmen will have more time for recreation and self-improvement (hear hear), and be better able to perform their duties as citizens generally. (Hear, hear.) We likewise believe that the work will be done more efficiently, more regularly (hear, hear), and with less cost and wear and tear in material, in addition to safety to life and limb. (Hear, hear.) We also believe that the output will be more regular, will give the managers more confidence in the ability of the workmen to perform a fair day's work, and will bring about a better feeling between employers and employed. We have no fear that if this is conceded there will be any diminution of output. In our opinion if this shorter time is conceded, the workman will be able to leave his work with that reserve of strength which will better enable him to attend his work the following day than under the present system. In our opinion the present plan actually takes out of a man during the last three-quarters of an hour in which he is engaged at his work that vital energy which it is utterly impossible to replace, and which, persistently exercised, works down the whole system, and brings in its course unnatural decay of the system.

In conclusion, we ask you to concede this day of eight hours in the following form, namely:—That it become a special rule in every mining inspector's district that no person shall work underground from bank to bank more than eight hours in any one day of 24 hours, and that the same shall be mutually agreed upon and form part of the Act of 1887. Unless such is the case it will be utterly impossible for us to take it, as our great object is to secure a uniform eight hours' day for the underground toilers in the United Kingdom. (Applause.)

Now, gentlemen, that is the statement that we have to place before you, which we are anticipating with the general public that you will agree to, and try to get the matter put into operation speedily. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I have been asked by the gentlemen who constitute the meeting of coal owners to speak to you upon this subject on their behalf, and I have very great pleasure, though a very great deal of diffidence, in complying with that request.

We had a meeting yesterday I may say, and the gentlemen representing a great number of districts in the country were present, and we were not then at all aware of the exact form in which you intended to put this subject before us. Therefore we could only discuss the question generally, and look to this meeting to put us in possession of the exact views which you have now placed before us. I can only say that with this short notice, having only those views put before us now, it is almost impossible for us to enter into a discussion of them on the present occasion.

Then there is another thing. The conference, we find, includes a district which has not previously been represented in the conference which we have had upon the wages question. We were not aware until a few minutes ago that the South Wales and Monmouthshire miners were represented on this question, and therefore, no coal owners from that district have been asked to attend our meeting. I am afraid we can only say that though we desire to discuss these questions in the most friendly spirit, and to meet the views of the miners in every way we can, consistently with what we consider to be the important interests which we represent, and the interests of the trades of the country, which depend upon the supply of fuel, that we are practically not prepared to-day to debate this question in detail or to enter into a discussion upon it. I only can say that I am perfectly sure that every gentleman on this side of the room will give the most careful attention to the document which Mr. Pickard has read to us, and of which we should be very glad to receive copies as early as possible, and we should be willing to adjourn this conference so as to give us time to consider the matter, and discuss it with you when we have had a full opportunity of ascertaining what really the document means. (Hear, hear.)

With regard to the facts that have been stated in that document, I think it might be desirable—I am putting this out as a suggestion of my own, and not on behalf of the gentlemen present, because they have not had an opportunity of considering it—that we should take some means—some possibly joint means—at all events, we shall have to take means—to ascertain whether the statements put forward are really verified by the facts. Of course, in saying that, I do not at all impugn the honesty or the straightforwardness with which these statements have been made. You have your means of getting statistics, we have ours; and it is very desirable that those statistics should be assimilated, and that we should really know that there is ground for the serious statements—some of them very serious statements—which you have just put before us. (Hear, hear.) I do not know how that can be done at present—it may be a matter for future consideration; but I do say this, that we feel this to be a very important question. We are prepared to enter into the consideration of it in a friendly spirit—(hear, hear)—and to meet you on a future occasion when we have had the opportunity of thoroughly going into the matter, and of consulting with that other large and important district which is not represented on the present occasion.

I do not know, sir, that I need say any more now. Perhaps Mr. Pickard would give us his views with respect to the suggestion I have made. (Applause.) Of course we must consult South Wales.

Mr. PICKARD: When we wrote asking the Mining Association of Great Britain and the Federation to meet us, we fully understood that South Wales and Northumberland and Durham were in the Mining Association, although not in the Federation.

Mr. PARKER RHODES: This is not a Mining Association meeting at all.

Mr. PICKARD: Yes, but I think our letter was so written to you to let you understand——

Mr. PARKER RHODES: There is a difficulty about that.

Mr. CHAMBERS: The Mining Association of Great Britain does not deal with questions of wages in any

way or shape; therefore any letter addressed to them upon such questions would not be considered by them. There is a special condition in the articles that no question of wages shall ever be considered by the Mining Association of Great Britain. The association is formed for very different purposes; it represents the whole of the trade in England, Wales, and Scotland for legislative purposes, but it does not in any way deal with the wages questions.

Mr. PICKARD: I took it for granted, Mr. Chairman, that this was not a wage question—that it was either a mutual arrangement which will affect every coal owner in the country, if we can so place it, or that it was a parliamentary question. We fully expected when we wrote that letter giving an invitation to both the Mining Association of Great Britain and the federated coal'owners——

Mr. CHAMBERS: Mr. Pickard allow me to point out that your address is from the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, 179, Grey Mare Lane, Bradford, Manchester.

Mr. PICKARD: Yes, just so.

Mr. CHAMBERS: We understood that that Federation did not include South Wales and the North of England. Whether that is so or not I do not know, but we have never supposed that either the North of England or South Wales were included in that Federation, and therefore we have called the coal owners from the districts which that Miners' Federation represents.

Mr. PICKARD: As a matter of fact I do not know whether you read the papers or not; sometimes they put correct reports in—on the eight hours' question—the whole of Scotland, South Wales, North Wales, and England are at one on this matter.

Mr. CHAMBERS: We were not aware of it before to-day—that is all.

Mr. PICKARD: We fully expected that you were aware of all this, because the South Wales people have passed their resolutions to act conjointly with us, and we have passed resolutions to act conjointly with them; and so with regard to Scotland. However, you can take it now from me that for anything I know to the contrary, the whole of Scotland, South Wales, North Wales, and England, with the exception of the Cleveland ironstone miners and Northumberland and Durham are at one on this matter. (Hear, hear.)

That is our position. And so far as your being prepared to meet us to-day to debate this point we take the statement as given to us by Mr. Chambers, that it is only fair that you should have an opportunity to debate what may be laid before you. We were not expecting we should decide the business to-day, but we were really thinking that after we had made our statement to-day you might be able to meet us to-morrow and to give us some sort of reply. (Applause.) If that is impossible then the matter must be adjourned to a more convenient time, and it would be no use prolonging this meeting one moment longer than necessary. However, if the chairman or Mr. Chambers has anything to say about whether they could give us any reply to-morrow or not—if that could be done it would perhaps assist in some way or other, even if it was not a complete reply—perhaps that might be done. I quite agree that you may not be able to reply off-hand to what we have said, but the papers have been boasting so much that the owners were ready to deliver to us all they had to say upon the matter that we did not think it showed a want of courtesy in not divulging what we had got to say before you to-day. At all events we accept Mr. Chambers's statement as to the position of the coal-owners.

Mr. CHAMBERS: I should just like to ask one question, Mr. Pickard, which, I think, would facilitate matters when we have to discuss them. I should like to know exactly what this eight hours' working-day means, and to whom it is to apply; and whether in saying eight hours per day, you mean that no pit shall work more than one shift. The language is not quite clear on that point.

Mr. PICKARD: This is a question that I am not prepared to answer just now, about one shift. Our demand is for an eight-hour day from bank to bank, dating from the bank to getting back to the bank for all persons working underground. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. CHAMBERS: Everybody?

Mr. PICKARD: That one person shall not be allowed to work more than that time in any 24 hours. (Applause.) I think you understand now.

Mr. CHAMBERS: That makes it perfectly clear.

Mr. HINGLEY: Does the proposed eight hours include any time for rest?

Mr. PICKARD: Gentlemen, the owners are not prepared to give us a statement, and I do not think we are justified in answering questions. (Hear, hear.) I would rather the owners debated the case and gave us their reply.

Mr. HINGLEY: That is a material point for our consideration.

Mr. PICKARD: I think our position is clear that the owners state fairly and candidly, we are not prepared to-day to debate this matter. I think when we get to the day of debating, that would be the time for the questions to be put.

Mr. CHAMBERS: But Mr. Pickard allow me; we want to know really what your demand is; it is not a question of debate at all, it is a question of what clearly your demand means—does it mean that every man who goes down at 6 o'clock in the morning shall be out by 2 o'clock in the afternoon? That is what you mean, I think?

Mr. PICKARD: That is so.

Mr. CHAMBERS: And any question of stopping or snap or anything of that kind is a matter that you do not say anything at all about at present.

Mr. PICKARD: We do not acknowledge the snap.

Mr. CHAMBERS: I think you said—it was not quite clear to everybody—that the Northumberland and Durham and the Cleveland miners were not represented.

Mr. PICKARD: They are not represented.

Mr. CHAMBERS: But that every other part of the kingdom was?

Mr. PICKARD: That is so.

Mr. CHAMBERS: Thank you. With reference to the question you put about having a meeting to-morrow, I may say that the gentlemen who are present on behalf of the coal-owners have come up from the various districts just to ascertain what the demand was, because there was a great difference of opinion, as I said at the first, at our meeting yesterday, as to what your demand meant; the gentlemen from the different districts were not really aware exactly what your demand meant, and there was in fact a great difference of opinion as to what it did mean; therefore they did not come instructed by their districts with any views which would make a meeting to be held to-morrow of really any service. We shall have to go back to our several districts and lay before them the statements you have made and get instructions from the districts before we can meet you further on the matter.

Mr. PICKARD: Then, Mr. Chairman, that practically concludes the proceedings for to-day.

Mr. CHAMBERS: There is the question of when we should adjourn the meeting to.

Mr. ABRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, I should wish, if it is possible, for you to reconsider the decision you have come to. The employers, no doubt, as well as this body of workmen, have come here at very great expense (hear, hear), with a view of meeting in a most conciliatory manner, and having a discussion upon the requests made by your workmen. If you would reconsider it, and meet us to-morrow, it would be a source of very great convenience to us. (Hear, hear.) I do not think that in all this body of the most intelligent and able among the coal-owners of England, you would find it very difficult to answer all that we have said in that document; and it will, I think, tend to increase the good spirit that has been shown here to-day (hear, hear) if you could in any way meet us to-morrow and give us an answer. It is not very probable that such a deputation will meet again. We knew before coming from South Wales that our employers were not going to be here—they have agreed I think not to come—but we came in order to show you that we are at one with the miners of England upon this question, and that whatever you did with it, we meant to have the same thing done for South Wales that would be done here. (Hear, hear.) That is exactly our object. But I am afraid if we leave here without discussion and without answer that it will tend to decrease the good spirit that is to-day evinced, and that probably we shall not meet again in the same numbers that we are now. If it is possible to meet again to-morrow, we should be very thankful, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAMBERS: I would say in reply to that remark, Mr. Abraham, though I reciprocate the good feeling you have expressed, and desire to go on with this matter in a friendly spirit, yet we have no representative from your district. We have not had an opportunity of communicating with them, and I think it would be very improper on our part to attempt to come to a settlement which might affect them very seriously without giving them an opportunity of consulting with us and stating their views on the matter. I think it is perfectly impossible for us to carry the thing any further at present, much though I regret the expense

to which gentlemen may be put by coming up on another occasion. Besides, of course, we have a number of gentlemen here who are representatives of large limited companies, and who have boards of directors to consult; and this is really not a matter to be settled off-hand in two or three days. It is a matter of the gravest moment. It is a matter which I am not going to express any opinion about, because I do not want to do so without thoroughly considering it, but it is a matter of the gravest moment, and the gravest importance to the coal trade, and to all the other industries that are dependent upon the coal trade; and, therefore, you really must give us time thoroughly to consider the matter, and be content with our assurance that we are willing to come again in the course of a reasonable time to meet you in a friendly spirit to consider the matter thoroughly. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. PICKARD: I should like to ask Mr. Chairman as to whether there is a possibility (to-morrow will be Thursday I know) of your continuing the proceedings on Friday.

Mr. CHAMBERS: None whatever.

Mr. PICKARD: I am only asking whether it can be done.

Mr. PARKER RHODES: Some will have to go back to Yorkshire, for instance. We shall have to tell them what we have heard, and the representatives of the other districts will have to do the same, and we shall have to communicate with Wales. There will have to be local meetings all over the country.

Mr. PICKARD: Then I would like to ask another question, Mr. Chairman, and that is, with regard to the meetings, would it be wise to call a full meeting next time, or to have a meeting within a smaller compass; is it possible for you now that both sides are here to come to a final decision the next time we do meet, because there is one thing I must point out that we have to meet the continental workmen at the end of March, but before that time we have to make up our minds as to what we shall do before we go there. Our miners are considering that point now; I am only pointing this out to show you that that will be one of the difficulties standing in the way, supposing our men took their votes and decided to do a certain thing, irrespective of any other matter, if the other thing was carried on too long. That was the reason why I wanted to know whether there could be a meeting on Friday, that is supposing the South Wales and the Scotch owners could be got here. If that could be done Bristol, or, at least Somerset—I do not know whether there is anybody here for Somerset. (A VOICE: Yes.) We nearly know the mind of Somerset——

Mr. CHAMBERS: Sir, excuse my pointing out that the gentlemen here are not in a position to pledge their districts. They have come for information. They must go back again and give that information to their various associations and various coal owners and get instructions with respect to it. Then, again, with regard to this meeting it was called at your request—(A VOICE: That is so)—and, of course, your deputation was what you chose to bring, and we were not aware how many you would bring at all.

Mr. PICKARD: That is our look out, Mr. Chairman, we accept the full responsibility for that. But if there is no likelihood of coming to a definite decision the next time we meet, would it not be a wiser thing to have a deputation from each mining district rather than a full representation?

Mr. CHAMBERS: It might be.

A COAL OWNER: Do you mean on your own side of the table, Mr. Pickard, or ours?

A VOICE: Both.

Mr. PICKARD: I was thinking all round. However, we will not ask for that if it can be decided to hold a meeting within a reasonable time. What would be a reasonable time? I know Mr. Parker Rhodes knows more about what dates are reasonable than anybody else.

Mr. PARKER RHODES: No.

Mr. PICKARD: Mr. Parker Rhodes and Mr. Maskell Peace know very well the date must suit them to a large extent, just the same as I expect the dates to suit myself.

The CHAIRMAN: They have, no doubt, as well as yourself, engagements—there are engagements on both sides—you have yours and they have theirs—we all have engagements, and the question that occurs to me as chairman is as to the date for the meeting to adjourn to in order to suit all parties. And then the next question is what you have suggested—whether you would come up in a body or whether you could do as you have suggested, appoint, say a dozen, on each side, or something of that kind.

Mr. CHAMBERS: With regard to the eight hours, Mr. Pickard, bank to bank, I am asked whether it means eight hours from the time that the first collier goes down to the time the last collier comes up. I take it that it means that if a man goes down at 6 o'clock in the morning you expect him to be out at 2 o'clock.

Mr. PICKARD: That is so.

Mr. CHAMBERS: If he goes down at 7 o'clock you expect him to be up at 3 o'clock, and if he goes down at half-past 6 you expect him to be up at half-past 2.

Mr. PICKARD: We would not expect, if a man went down at half-past 6 that he should be back at 2.

Mr. PARKER RHODES: The better plan would be this: that Mr. Peace and I should communicate with you as to the date.

The CHAIRMAN: I think it would be a very good thing in the interests of both sides—and I am merely expressing it as chairman—if the secretaries on both sides were to confer together as to the adjournment, so that we might suit the convenience of both sides. I shall be very happy to attend at any time, and I have no doubt those who are deputed to attend will be so too, and will come as early as I can.

Mr. PICKARD: I think we should not defer it longer than Tuesday fortnight. I think a fortnight would be quite sufficient time for you to get to know.

Mr. CHAMBERS: We will try and arrange it.

The CHAIRMAN: There is one difficulty in my mind, that is, where you have boards of directors, you cannot get them together easily, and, therefore, I do not see that a fortnight would be sufficient.

Mr. CHAMBERS: We will do our best to get it within that time.

The CHAIRMAN: Shall we leave it, Mr. Pickard, at this; that it is to be on this day fortnight, subject to the secretaries being able to arrange it so?

Mr. PICKARD: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Or leave it to the secretaries to arrange for it to be as soon as it possibly can to suit both parties.

Mr. HINGLEY: I think we had better fix days.

Mr. PICKARD: I think the better plan would be to fix the Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday of the second week.

Mr. MASKELL PEACE: Would you say the third week—on the 11th, 12th, or 13th of February?

Mr. PARKER RHODES: You must bear in mind that there are a number of large concerns whose boards of directors will not meet within that time. It is perfectly idle to ask people of that description for a decision until they have had a board meeting. Their managers cannot give a decision.

The CHAIRMAN: The boards of directors are, I think, the chief difficulty.

Mr. PICKARD: But that being so, the boards of directors are as easily got at as the others, as a rule.

Mr. PARKER RHODES: They would not call a special meeting—they would only meet at the ordinary monthly time—their times are all fixed beforehand, and they meet at regular monthly periods, some will be within the time and some will not.

The CHAIRMAN: So far as I am concerned, Mr. Pickard, I will attend any day.

Mr. CHAMBERS: I wish to ask Mr. Pickard a question again; I do not know whether he can answer it more clearly. I asked it before, and I thought our friends were satisfied, but they do not understand clearly now. With respect to the eight hours from bank to bank, is that to include any time for rest, or if you get the eight hours from bank to bank, will you adopt the snap system?

Mr. HINGLEY: Or does it mean continuous work?

Mr. PICKARD: What we mean is this: I take it for granted that it is well known that, in some portions of Yorkshire, there is no acknowledged snap time.

Mr. CHAMBERS: Yes, there is not in Yorkshire, but in other districts there is.

Mr. PARKER RHODES: That is the difficulty.

Mr. PICKARD: Where the snap time comes in, I suppose the snap time will be taken out. (Hear, hear.) We say eight hours,' from bank to bank, work in the pit.

A COAL OWNER: Actual work.

Mr. PICKARD: Eight hours from bank to bank.

Mr. PARKER RHODES: It is not understood now.

Mr. PICKARD: I thought it was clearly understood, Mr. Chairman, that we were asking for an eight hours' shift from bank to bank. We are not asking for half an hour breakfast and an hour at dinner—we are asking that the pits may work continuously from the time we get down to work to coming out again.

Mr. LONGDEN: Eight hours' turn in fact?

Mr. PICKARD: We do not say eight hours' turn; the men will take their own snap.

Mr. ABRAHAM: Let that be arranged locally.

Mr. CHAMBERS: I should like to put this point to you, Mr. Pickard, as it has been suggested to me. Men

begin to go down say at 6 o'clock in the morning, the hanger-on must be there at that time. Perhaps it takes an hour to let down all the men—then the men begin to come out at 2, and the last man comes out at 3, but the hanger-on must be there nine hours to get all those men out again. Do you want us to have a second hanger-on to ring them out for the last hour?

Mr. PICKARD: As a matter of fact you do that now.

Mr. CHAMBERS: What?

Mr. PICKARD: You have a second hand.

Mr. CHAMBERS: No.

Mr. PICKARD: Yes.

Mr. CHAMBERS: Of course I admit, Mr. Pickard, it is a small point, but it is a point which shows that a thing of this kind would have to be worked with elasticity.

The CHAIRMAN: I think, Mr. Pickard, you wanted to say something just now.

Mr. PICKARD: Yes, sir; we are quite willing to meet the owners so far as is possible, and we will take the 11th, which has been suggested by Mr. Peace as the date. We do not ask for another futile meeting. We want to have a meeting where the matter can be thoroughly thrashed out and some decision arrived at. There is one thing I want to impress upon you, that if South Wales and Scotland have a fair invitation to attend the meeting their case shall not be put in the way of any further adjournment, but that those owners who are here make up their mind what they will do so far as they are concerned.

Do we understand that this meeting stands adjourned until the 11th?

Mr. CHAMBERS: Will you move it?

Mr. PICKARD: I move it.

Mr. CHAMBERS: And I second it.

Mr. MASKELL PEACE: Same place and time.

Mr. HINGLEY: Had it not better be earlier in the day? 2 o'clock is rather late.

Mr. PICKARD: Say 1 o'clock.

Mr. HINGLEY: That would prevent a good many people coming up.

The CHAIRMAN: Shall I put it half-past 1 on Wednesday the 11th that this meeting stands adjourned to?

Mr. PICKARD: Yes.

The motion was then put to the meeting in the ordinary way and declared to be carried.

Mr. CHAMBERS (to Mr. Pickard): Would you send us a printed copy of the statement you read?

Mr. PICKARD: Yes, we have no objection to send you a printed copy of what I have read from.

Mr. CHAMBERS: Thank you.

Mr. PICKARD: And if you get a reply written to it I hope you will be good enough to send me a copy.

Mr. CHAMBERS: Yes, certainly.

Mr. PICKARD: Now what report shall be rendered to the press?

Mr. PARKER RHODES: I think there should be none myself. Simply say that the meeting has been held and that the proceedings have been strictly private as your meeting was yesterday. That would be better for everybody.

Mr. PICKARD: Yes, that is right.

Mr. HINGLEY: I think we had better give a report of what has occurred, it is very meagre and very simple.

Mr. PARKER RHODES: Why need we take the public into our confidence about our negotiations and everything of that sort? Let us manage our own business.

Mr. PICKARD: So far as we are concerned, Mr. Ashton and myself have full powers to arrange with the secretaries and the president on the other side.

Mr. CHAMBERS: That would be the very best way of doing it, I think.

Mr. PARKER RHODES: No communication to go except what comes from us.

Mr. PICKARD: Yes, will you move that?

Mr. CHAMBERS: You move it and I will second it.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE: I move that.

Mr. CHAMBERS: And I second it, and I will ask the gentlemen who are present on both sides to refrain as far as possible from giving to the reporters any statement with respect to what has transpired here, because such a statement might be very misleading and might not do the negotiations any good.

Mr. PARKER RHODES: It might do an infinity of harm.

The CHAIRMAN: A resolution has been proposed by Mr. Whitehouse and seconded by Mr. Chambers, that no communication be given to the press in any way except from the four secretaries, two on each side. Do you approve of that?

The motion was then put to the meeting and declared to be carried unanimously.

Mr. HENRY LEWIS: I propose a vote of thanks to the chairman for his conduct in the chair.

Mr. WHITEFIELD: I second the motion that the thanks of this meeting be given to the chairman.

Mr. Henry Lewis then put the motion to the meeting, which was carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank you.

(*The proceedings then terminated.*)

CONFERENCE HELD FEBRUARY 11TH, 1891.

The following coal owners were present:—

Mr. A. BARNES, M.P. (in the Chair).

Mr. B. HINGLEY, M.P.	Mr. MATTHEW HALL.
Sir ALFRED HICKMAN.	,, T. Y. GREENER.
Mr. A. M. CHAMBERS.	,, G. S. WILSON.
,, J. DEVONSHIRE ELLIS.	,, W. J. GREENER.
,, ALFRED HEWLETT.	,, G. P. BIDDER, Q.C.
Captain HARRISON.	,, C. R. MORGAN.
Mr. T. DRAYTON GRIMKÉ.	,, H. G. NADIN.
,, R. SMALLMAN.	,, TRAFFORD NADIN.
,, JOHN HALL.	,, THOMAS CARRINGTON.
,, SAMUEL ALSOP.	,, G. S. CLAUGHTON.
,, D. DAVY.	,, JOHN SMITH.
,, A. C. BRIGGS.	,, EDGAR STOREY.
,, E. BAINBRIDGE.	,, W. BAGNOLD SMITH.
,, JOHN JACKSON.	,, MATTHEW LYON.
,, GEORGE BOND.	Colonel WILSON.
,, JOHN WILLIAMSON.	Mr. E. STANLEY CLARK.
,, JOHN BATEY.	,, H. LEWIS.
,, ROBERT HANDSLEY.	,, FRANCIS N. ELLIS.
,, C. TYLDEN WRIGHT.	,, J. B. COCHRANE.
,, WILLIAM DAWSON.	,, ROBERT EDDISON.
,, A. C. BOYD.	,, WATKIN DAVIES.
,, FRED. LEES.	,, F. G. COGMORE.
,, W. S. BARRETT.	,, JOHN JARRADD.
,, WILLIAM JOHNSON.	,, R. LUCAS.
,, J. R. KNOWLES.	,, ROBERT LAKEMAN.
,, GEORGE LEWIS.	,, J. M. VICKERS.
,, THOMAS HANCOCK.	,, C. STEWART.
,, ROBERT HEATH, Jun.	,, C. B. CRAWSHAW.
,, W. E. GARFORTH.	,, RICHARD THOMAS.
,, F. J. JONES.	,, JOSEPH THURSBY.
,, J. A. LONGDEN.	,, BEN DAY.
,, J. STORES SMITH.	,, ARTHUR BARNES.
,, WILLIAM SPENCER.	,, S. BREWIS.

OFFICIALS.

Mr. B. PICKARD, M.P., President.
,, SAMUEL WOODS, Vice-President.
,, E. EDWARDS, Treasurer.
,, THOMAS ASHTON, Secretary.
,, MASKELL PEACE, } Joint Secretaries.
,, F. PARKER RHODES, }

Miners' Representatives.	Districts.
Messrs. EDWARD COWEY, W. PARROTT, JAMES MURRAY, and JOHN WADSWORTH.	Yorkshire.
Messrs. R. ISHERWOOD, THOMAS ASPINWALL, R. WATT, THOMAS GREENALL, JAMES FINNEY, JAMES BATTLE, THOMAS GLOVER, W. CROMPTON, T. LOMAX, W. HARDMAN, J. WHITEHEAD, E. FRAZER, and J. CHEETHAM.	Lancashire.
Messrs. JAMES HASLAM, W. E. HARVEY, W. HALLAM, BARNET KENYON, and W. BUCKLEY.	Derbyshire.
Messrs. SAMUEL WHITEHOUSE, B. DEAN, A. STANLEY, W. WESLEY, G. H. ROWLINSON, HENRY WOODLAND, W. WHITEFIELD, W. JOHNSON, J. PEACEFULL, B. WINWOOD, H. VEAL, G. ASHMAN, and W. PETTIFOR.	Midland Federation.
Messrs. W. BAILEY, A. STEWART, and W. HARDY.	Nottingham.
Mr. THOMAS CHAMBERS - -	Leicestershire.
Mr. A. SHARPE - - -	Cumberland.
Mr. W. BRACE - - -	Monmouth.
Messrs. R. JONES, S. GEORGE, W. DAVIES, and D. JONES.	North Wales.
Messrs J. KEIR HARDIE and J. C. ROBERTSON.	Scotland.
Messrs. W. ABRAHAM, M.P., D. MORGAN, T. RICHARDS, ISAAC EVANS, D. J. MORRIS, W. THOMAS and JAMES WALTERS.	South Wales and Monmouth Federation.
Messrs. E. OLDBURY, H. RUST, G. CARTER, and J. RICHARDS.	West Bromwich.

need only slightly increase that disadvantage to shut out the inland coalfields to a large extent from the markets on which they depend. This argument applies with equal force to competition with the continental coalfields, and in their case it must be remembered that such competition is every year becoming more severe, and that the maintenance of our supremacy in foreign markets is essential for our existence. Apart from the foregoing weighty considerations we think there are errors in your statement that require correction. Those statements are as follows:—(1.) "That the "time put in by the miners at present is on the average "from 5 in the morning till 2 or 3 in the afternoon, "which means 10½ to 11 hours actually engaged in "getting to their work and being engaged at the coal "face. This means more time put in than in the other "staple trades of this country." This overstates the case, as from their own figures the extreme time is only 10 hours per day. In almost the whole of the staple trades of the country the workmen are absent from their homes at least 12 hours per day, as work usually runs from 6 o'clock in the morning till 5 in the afternoon. (2.) The statement is made that "when they "descend the mines the only pure air they possess "during that day is what they take down with them," and "also from the time they enter the mine they are "breathing impure air." As a matter of fact, with the improved modern means of ventilation, the air in most mines is quite as pure and healthy as in most of the mills engaged in the textile trades and in the workshops of a large number of industries, such as those used in the manufacture of iron files, cutlery, clothing, boots and shoes, &c. (3.) It is stated that "It has been "ascertained that the deaths among our miners are on "the average higher than in the case of those working "in other trades; that we have more disabled, per-"manently disabled, men than any other trade, and "there is not the slightest doubt that we have more "killed, seriously injured, and non-seriously injured "than half the trade of the country put together." This statement is an exaggeration. According to a parliamentary return ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 15th August 1890, the number of persons seriously injured among railway servants is considerably larger in proportion to the number employed than the number seriously injured in collieries. The following table extracted from the return shows that to be the case:—

—	Total Number employed.	Deaths per 1,000.	Injured per 1,000.
Coal mines - -	581,809	19·1	73·6
Railway servants -	381,626	11·8	272·2

With regard to the average death rate among the mining population, the following statement shows that it is only slightly in excess of other occupations. These figures are taken from the supplement to the 45th Annual Report of the Registrar-General.

TABLE 6.—MEAN ANNUAL MORTALITY AT SUCCESSIVE PERIODS OF LIFE OF MALES ENGAGED IN VARIOUS OCCUPATIONS.

—	AGES.				
	15	20	25	45	65 and upwards.
All males, mortality per 1,000.	4·57	6·04	10·16	25·27	92·65
Occupied males -	2·95	5·60	9·71	24·63	88·71
Coal mines, mean -	4·68	6·18	7·64	25·11	117·70

TABLE L.—COMPARATIVE MORTALITY OF MALES 25—65 YEARS OF AGE.

—	Nervous diseases.	Suicide.	Diseases of Circulatory System.	Phthisis.	Diseases Respiratory System.	Urinary.	Liver.	Digestive.	Alcoholism.	Gout.	Plumbism.
All males, England and Wales.	119	14	120	220	182	41	30	38	10	3	1
Mines (mean) -	72	3	55	126	202	27	22	32	3	—	—

—	Accidents.	All other causes.	Total.
General - - -	67	146	1,000
Mines - - -	186	115	883

Extract from letter of Dr. Ogle, page xlix.:—

"COAL MINERS.—The death rates of coal miners are "surprisingly low. In spite of their terrible liability "to accident, and their constant exposure to an "atmosphere vitiated by coal dust, by foul air, and by "an excessively high temperature, the comparative "mortality of these labourers is considerably below "that of all males." (Again), "The mortality of the "miners from all other causes (than accidents) is below "that of the general male population." (Again), "If "we exclude these accidents it will be found that the "mortality of the coal miners only slightly exceeds "that of the most healthy class of men in our table, "viz., the agriculturists, that is to say the farmers, "the agricultural labourers, and the gardeners."

With regard to the premiums for life assurance charged by the Industrial Life Assurance Company, the Prudential, Refuge, and London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow Companies make no higher charges for miners and railway men than for the other working classes. One company only (so far as has been ascertained), namely, the Scottish Temperance Insurance Company, make an extra charge on the lives of miners and railway men, but the extra amount of that charge is only 1 per cent.

(4.) The next statement is that "it has been ascer-"tained that a great proportion of the accidents "resulting in persons killed and injured occurred "during the later hours of the shift work." The return relied on to prove this is one that was granted on the motion of Mr. Fenwick, M.P., showing the number for the last 10 years of the fatal explosions which were notified to the inspectors of mines, and the number of lives lost, and the approximate hour of the shift when the explosion occurred. This return, however, shows rather the following contrary results:—

COAL MINES, FATAL EXPLOSIONS DURING LAST TEN YEARS SHOWING THE HOUR OF SHIFT IN WHICH THEY HAVE OCCURRED.

1st.	2nd.	3rd.	4th.	5th.	6th.	7th.	8th.	9th.	10th.	-	15th.
48	22	29	26	24	17	11	16	10	1	-	1

Total first four hours, 125. Total after fourth hour, 80.

COAL MINES EXPLOSIONS (FATAL) DURING TEN YEARS. NUMBER OF DEATHS IN EACH. HOUR OF EMPLOYMENT.

1st.	2nd.	3rd.	4th.	5th.	6th.	7th.	8th.	9th.	10th.	11th.	-	15th.
130	317	278	481	333	69	182	60	95	2	-	-	3

Total first four hours, 1,202. Total after fourth hour, 744.

It should be noted that this return refers only to explosions; the causes of the greatest number of accidents in mines are, however, falls of roof and side. We have at present no statistics to show what proportion of these accidents occur during the earlier hours of the shift, but the general experience of mining engineers is, and the contention of the men themselves when the last Mines Act was passed, was that a larger proportion occurs during the first two or three hours of the shift, and this was naturally explained by the men's representatives on that occasion by the fact that during the time in which the working places are not occupied, the gradual weight which is always at work has loosened both roof and sides, and rendered the place in the first hours of the shift more liable to such accidents. (5.) A further statement is, "We have no fear that if this is "conceded there will be any diminution in the out-"put." It is impossible to understand upon what ground this statement rests. The usual practice in the Midland Counties, Lancashire and Cheshire, and North and South Wales is to work a single shift. It is also the custom to wind coals from 8 to 10 hours. If every person employed underground is to be drawn out within 8 hours of the time he goes down, it is manifest that coal winding cannot be carried on for more than 6½ to 7 hours, and in many instances even less than

that, as at nearly all the large pits it occupies from one hour to two to lower and raise the men employed. According to the present special rules, in winding men the engines have to run slower than when winding coal. This proposal, if acceded to, might lead to winding the men out at a quicker rate, and increase the danger of this operation. The result of a 6½ to 7 hours winding day would be to reduce the output of coal from 20 to 25 per cent., and as a very large number of all persons employed underground are paid by the piece, this would very largely reduce the aggregate wages fund, and, consequently every pieceman would suffer in proportion. Another very serious result would be a large increase in the cost of production. This lessened production and increased cost would lead to a very considerable advance in the prices of fuel of all descriptions. This would bear very hardly upon the whole of the industries of the country dependent upon the supplies of fuel. At the present time the iron trade is in a state of depression; many firms owning blast furnaces and rolling mills find it impossible to carry on their concerns at a reasonable profit even at the present prices. Any considerable increase of prices would inevitably lead to a complete stagnation of the iron trade and many other industries connected with it. Blast furnaces would be blown out; rolling mills would be stopped; shipbuilding works and engineering works would be unable to carry on their operations; and the result would be an enormous diminution in the demand for coal, a fall of prices, and a serious struggle between coal owners and miners for a reduction of wages, and a return to reasonable hours of working. (6.) The exact form in which this day of eight hours is demanded is as follows: "That it become a special rule "in every mining inspector's district that no person "shall work underground from bank to bank more "than eight hours in any one day of 24 hours, and that "the same shall be mutually agreed upon, and form "part of the Act of 1887." As we have already stated, such a course as the one proposed, in our judgment, cannot legally be carried out, and it raises the large question as to whether Parliament should fix the hours of adult labour. If Parliament is to be asked to do this, why should it not also fix the rate of wages and the rate of profits to be earned in this industry? There are about 600,000 miners employed in this country, representing about 3,000,000 of the population, out of a total population of 38,000,000, who are all more or less consumers of coal. If the result of any Parliamentary enactment should lead to a considerable increase in the price of coal, it is perfectly certain that the great bulk of the consumers will raise their voice with respect to it, and insist upon its being supplied at a reasonable price. In conclusion, we wish to make it clear that if the working hours in different districts do interfere with the health of those concerned, that all of us would desire to find a remedy. It seems to us that it would be easy to ascertain beyond doubt what the facts are, so far as they are in dispute between us, and we should be quite willing (either by means of a Joint Committee or, still better, by means of a Royal Commission, if one could be obtained) to ascertain the real facts and circumstances, and endeavour in conjunction with you to find a solution for any proved and ascertained grievance."

Mr. PICKARD: I wish simply to ask a final question. There is no definite statement in that paper, as I was led to believe there would be, as to whether or not the coal owners here assembled could say yes or no to the plain, pointed question whether or not you could agree to an eight hours' day from bank to bank.

Mr. PARKER RHODES: The report which I have read contained this sentence: "In the first place, we are "bound to tell you that it seems quite impossible to "agree to the establishment of such a special rule as "you ask for, which would render it a penal offence "under the Mines Act of 1887 for any person to work "more than eight hours in any one day," &c.

Mr. PICKARD: Then I may take that as an answer that the owners who have considered the question are not in favour of conceding the eight hours' day from bank to bank, either under the Act of 1887 or in any other form. Now, gentlemen, it is only fair that I should ask you to adjourn this meeting, and let us have that document to consider for one hour.

Mr. CHAMBERS: I should like to say, with respect to the last remark of Mr. Pickard, that this request has not been put before us in any other form. His own statement, read and considered and approved by the gentlemen representing the miners, says so most distinctly. It says at the last paragraph: "Unless such "is the case, it will be utterly impossible for us to take "it, as our great object is to secure a uniform eight "hours for the underground *employés* of the United "Kingdom." (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN: Do you move the adjournment?

Mr. PICKARD: Yes, I move that this meeting stand adjourned for an hour.

The motion was seconded by Mr. J. Stores Smith, and was declared carried.

After an interval of about an hour the conference was resumed.

Mr. PICKARD: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I have got very little to say on this occasion, because the coal owners' reply has precluded any statement to be further made except a mere statement of the position of things. Before I read what I have on paper here, I wish to say I hope it will be understood, that seeing we mutually agreed last time we were here not to publish anything in the press, the same will be done with regard to this meeting. (Hear, hear.) And that unless both sides can agree, there will be nothing reported to the press. It is a well-known fact that somebody sent a report to the "Daily Telegraph" last time—and a very much perverted report of what was said at the meeting. The report stated that it was a coal owner that did it, That was the concluding paragraph in the report. Therefore, I hope that on this occasion neither a coal owner, nor a workman, nor any of their representatives will be so mean as to take out of a room like this, where everybody is pledged to secrecy, any report of the meeting. (Hear, hear.) I have simply to read as follows: "Gentlemen, I am desired on behalf of those "whom we represent to thank you for meeting us to "discuss the question of eight hours, and to regret "that you are not in a position to accede to our demand. "We also desire to repeat that this meeting was asked "for, to meet an apparent public desire and sentiment, "on the ground that it was believed the coal owners "and the workmen could deal with the question. "Having failed in our efforts, it remains for us to take "such action as may be deemed necessary to obtain "the object aimed at, and as made known to you at our "last meeting. We, therefore, trust good feeling will "continue between us." I will now move that the best thanks of this meeting be accorded to the chairman for presiding over it.

Mr. CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I am perfectly sure that the coal-owners appreciate the good feeling expressed in the statement which Mr. Pickard has just read. We have met and discussed the question; you have given us your statement; we have given you ours; and we trust that that statement which has been placed before you will have, as no doubt it will, your most careful consideration. I do not know that I ought to say anything more at all except this, that though I think we shall be perfectly willing to agree that no part of the proceedings of this meeting should in any way be reported, yet you cannot help the question being discussed in public, and I think it will be eminently desirable that the two statements which have been put forward should be published without note or comment. I am sure that in saying that I am expressing the feelings of the whole of the coal owners, and I hope Mr. Pickard and gentlemen on that side will see their way to agree to that. There is no doubt it is a difficult thing to prevent reports getting out. Reporters are gentlemen of very persuasive manners, and of very great ability, and they get a little bit from one gentleman, who tries to keep away from them all he can, and a little bit from another perhaps, and then they string something together which is an entire misrepresentation of what occurred. I think with regard to the proceedings we should agree with you that they should be considered confidential; but with regard to the statements themselves, as the question is very largely discussed by the public, I think it would be a very desirable thing to allow those statements to be published.

Mr. PICKARD: Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the workmen I cannot agree to anything of the sort. Our statement was made to you in all good faith, and if it was to be made public at all we might have published it at the beginning, before ever we had made it known to you. These are private and confidential meetings, and we hope they will remain so.

Mr. CHAMBERS: We had better be agreed on this point if we possibly can. I am afraid you cannot prevent the general subject of the eight hours' question being discussed.

Mr. PICKARD: No.

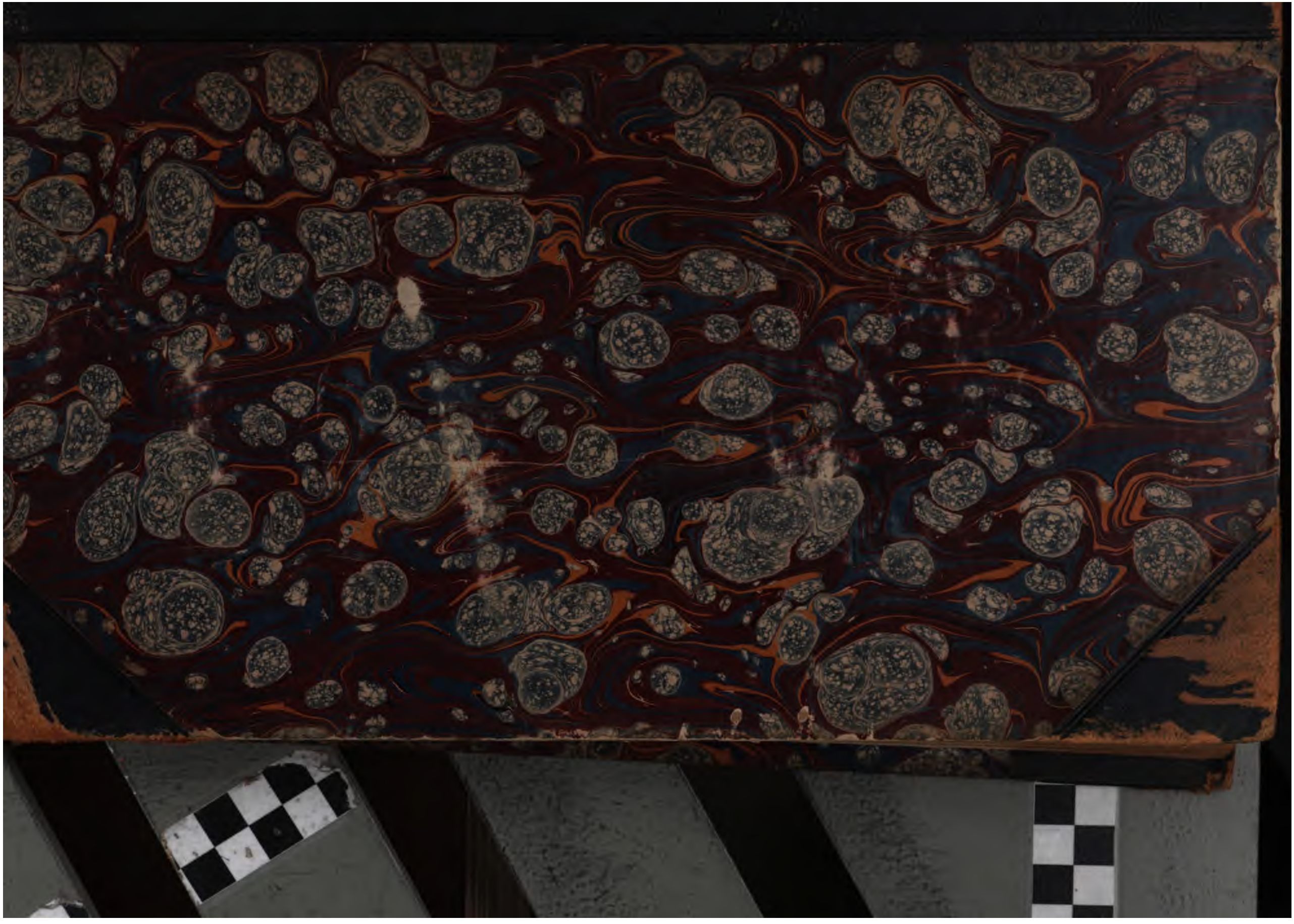
Mr. CHAMBERS: You are discussing it, and we have never yet, on the part of the coal owners, up to the present time published any statement. At the same time I do not think that it is really necessary, or desirable at all events, in defence of the position which we have taken, that we should be allowed to discuss the matter—perhaps, without referring to this meeting—but that the whole thing should be really open for public discussion.

Mr. PICKARD: Mr. Chairman, I am not fencing in this matter. We have kept good faith up to now, and to say that the coal owners have not discussed this question is really to go beyond the mark altogether. I have had four or five leading journals connected with mining sent me, with a long letter from a man that does nothing at all but advocate the interest of the coal owners, iron and steel workers, and what not—Mr. Percy—and the long statement contained in your report is embodied in that. I do not wish to say anything awkward, but to say that it has not been discussed is not correct. I think it has been well discussed. I think it is only fair that this should be said. We have been discussing this matter as individuals outside, in the public and in the press, and I shall have no objection to any colliery owner taking that course himself, but seeing that we have met and agreed that the matter shall be quiet and private, I do not think we should be justified in saying that these statements should go to the public press. We confined ourselves in a very limited area as to what we say. You have taken three weeks to consider the matter, and, I think, for the credit of all concerned, we should let this matter remain where it is. We have asked and have been refused, and you have given your reasons, and that is all we want to know.

Mr. C. TYLDEN WRIGHT: Perhaps Mr. Pickard will be good enough to assure us that he will let the matter drop.

Mr. CHAMBERS: Of course, we have kept perfect good faith as you have in this matter, and after the understanding that was come to at the previous meeting, that these proceedings should be strictly private, I really think that we had better let it remain in that way for the present. (Hear, hear.) At the same time it will be open to any individual coal owner to make such statement—not using the precise statement that we have given to you—in any way or shape as he may wish, and to enter into any discussion that he thinks proper.

Mr. PICKARD: With regard to that you may take it for granted that if any individual colliery owner makes such a statement, he will not be long before he gets a reply.

Mr. CHAMBERS: I will second the vote of thanks to the Chairman.

The resolution was put by Mr. Pickard, and carried by acclamation, and the proceedings terminated.